Early Religion:

OR A

DISCOURSE

OF THE

Duty and Interest

OF

YOUTH.

With some Advices to *Parents* and *Aged People*, to promote it in their several Capacities.

The Second Edition much Enlarged.

By *Timothy Rogers*, M. A.

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THE PREFACE TO THE Young Readers.

THERE *is not in all the World a more graceful or comely thing, than to see a Young Person serious betimes, and employing all the Warmth and Vigour of his tender Youth for God, and for a Life to come: And how mean and obscure soever such an One's outward Circumstances may be, yet he is truly Noble, and of all others most Honourable. Though this blinded World, that sees not the Excellency of his Descent, the Greatness of his Kindred, nor the Certainty and Sweetness of his Hopes, may give him no extraordinary Entertainment, yet he shall be*

applauded by God and his Angels at the last. Of this Honour, I desire you my Readers to be ambitious, and to place your Affections and your Thoughts upon Divine and Heavenly Things. You have lived but a little while, if you have not met with various Disappointments and Vexations here on Earth: You have had but small Experience, or at least have not improved that which you have had, if you have not learned to know, that all things below the Sun are meer Vanity, and that it is the wisest, the safest, and the most pleasant way, to take your Eyes off from a deceitful World, and to fix them upon such Objects as are in every respect suitable to your Faculties, and truly worthy of your daily Contemplation.

The Remembrance of God betimes, will delight you now, and at length yield you an Harvest of joyous and comfortable Thoughts; by this you will behave your selves as the Candidates of Glory, and do nothing that is mean or sordid: By this your Souls will act suitably to their Spiritual and Immortal Nature; by this you will be Humble, and Modest, and Temperate, and Sober; and your Morning Light will both refresh your selves and others too. It will be a Comfort to your Ministers to see that you profit by their Instructions;

ſtructions; and that whilſt many Thouſands are travelling in the Way of Hell, you are going in the Way of Heaven. To your Parents it will be extreamly reviving, to ſee that you endeavour, not only to pleaſe them, but God alſo. It will give them new Life and Spirit in their Trade and Buſineſs, when they conſider that they are taking Pains for Children that are ſo Dutiful and ſo Good. You will be a Comfort to them whilſt they live, and when they die they will part with you with great Satisfaction, when they know that they leave you under the Protection of an Almighty Father, and under the Wings of his Providence: And above all, when they have hope to meet you with Joy at the laſt Day, and with you their deareſt Off-ſpring, to ſpend an Eternity in Praiſes and Hallelujahs.

This Early Remembrance of your Creator, will make you not to comply with the Atheiſtical Humour of thoſe Young People that ridicule the Scriptures, and all things Sacred and Divine; and who when they are in the committing the greateſt Folly, would be called Wits; as if to pleaſe the Devil, to forget their Maker, and expoſe themſelves to Everlaſting Miſery, were a mighty witty thing; whereas the dulleſt and the worſt of Men can do all this faſt enough. You I am ſure will

have

have no cause to envy their prophane Simplicity. This Remembrance of God will regulate your Carriage, and teach you that Meekness, that Condescention, and that Quietness of Spirit which will render your Conversation grateful and exemplary. This will make you to be more industrious for the Welfare of your Souls, than of your Bodies; and as these have their daily Seasons of Refreshment, so you will also feed your Minds every Day with Holy Thoughts and Meditations.

This Early Religion will make you to find more delight in Reading the Scriptures, than in the Reading of Plays, Novels, vain Poems, and Romances, which are cook'd with very sweet Sauce, meerly to vitiate and deprave your Appetites; and which are like those Cheats that cloath themselves in a very fine dress, only to be less suspected, and to have the better opportunity to rob and pilfer. Your Solidity, your Seriousness, and the better entertainment which you receive from the Scriptures, will cause you to nauseate and disrelish those airy frothy Trifles. You will by this consider, that your Time, your Money, and whatsoever you have, is not your own, but God's. You will not lose your time in striving to be Equipp'd after the most splendid, the lightest, and the gayest Fashi-

ons;

ons. *This will keep you that you shall neither be Sordid, nor too Finical; you shall neither be too Jocular, nor too Morose and starch'd. And by this you will not* (as we use to say) lay all your Money upon your Back; *but know, that it is given you by God, that you may with it help to cloath his Naked, and to feed his Poor.*

This holy Course so well begun, will sanctify your Health, and make your Sickness tolerable. It will teach you to bear it whilst it continues, or to be thankful when it is removed: and how this is to be done, I have largely shewed in my Discourses on Sickness and Recovery, *that have already seen the Light. This also will either continue to you the Sense of God's Favour, or teach you with Faith and Hope to wait when he is withdrawn; and how this is to be done, I shall largely shew in my* Discourse concerning Trouble of Mind, and the Diseases of Melancholy, *which will be published in a little time. But I know Young People are not much affected with what is tedious, and therefore as this Discourse it self is not very long, so neither shall this Preface be so. All that I further beg of you is, that you bring to the reading of the following Book, Minds that are unprejudiced, and willing to obey Truth*

when

when it comes to you in a plain and humble dress: and to your Reading, add your Prayers, that it may be profitable to you: with a Design of this it was first written, and with this Design it is now, with many Additions, reprinted. That it may be for the Glory of God, and the good of many Souls, is the sincere desire of

London, July 30. 1691.

Your Friend and Servant,

T. Rogers.

Early

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OR THE

Duty and Interest of Youth.

ECCLES. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth, while the evil Days come not, nor the Years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

WHEN we seriously consider the miserable and uncertain State of Men since the Fall of *Adam*, how many wide Breaches the Transgression of our first Parents has made, both for Spiritual and Eternal Dangers to enter in upon us, and yet how secure and careless Men are of their Danger, it ought to affect our Hearts with a great Tenderness and Pity; but it ought much more to affect us, if we consider, that of all others, Young Men are generally the most careless, though they are beseged with more Enemies, and liable to more

Dangers; yet for the moſt part they are employed in mean Affairs, and led away by thoſe Delights that have no relation to their Happineſs, and are forgetful of their God, and the deplorable Condition of their own Souls. Secure they are, though they have in their Bodies the Seeds of innumerable Diſtempers: Againſt which all the Skill of the wiſeſt Phyſicians cannot give Relief: they have in them the Seeds of thoſe Diſtempers, which, notwithſtanding all their Briskneſs, and Mirth, and Confidence, will ſhortly ſend them to the Grave, and to the Tribunal of God, whoſe Smiles or Frowns will immediately make them to live or die for ever. It becomes us all to give what Relief we can to our Fellow-Creatures; and if God in the Riches of his Grace hath ſeaſoned our Hearts with an early ſenſe of Himſelf, and of the Excellency, the Power, and the Beauty of Religion, we are obliged to conduct others, as much as we can, to this God, and to this Religion: And now whilſt it is called to day we ought to do it, now whilſt we and they have Health and Opportunity, for in a little time they will be paſt our help, and we our ſelves ſilent in the Duſt. Happy is the Man that God will honour in his Work, happy is he that is ſucceſsful in it, and cannot only ſave himſelf, but carry others with him to Salvation. This is an Happineſs of which we ought all to be ambitious of; this is that which I wiſh and pray for, and God grant that this Diſcourſe which is written for his Glory, may by his Bleſſing have a powerful effect upon many Young People, in taking off their Eyes from the flattering Vanities

ties and Pleaſures of the World, and in turning them towards him their Great and Glorious Creator: Which they will ſoon do if they attend to the great Counſel of this Preacher, the wiſeſt of Men; that after a long Experience of all that had but a ſhew of Pleaſure, or was accounted worthy to be loved by the Sons of Men, reap'd nothing but Vexation, and Bitterneſs, and a ſharp Remembrance; and therefore concluded, that it was moſt uſeful and expedient to guard the Mind againſt thoſe Follies, and betimes to remember God.

In the former Chapter, having explained what were the Comforts and Happineſs of Life; that, (Ver. 7.) *the Light was ſweet, and that it was a pleaſant thing for the Eyes to behold the Sun*; i. e. to enjoy a proſperous unafflicted State, and all that our Hearts can well deſire: Yet he tells us, *ver.* 8. That *though we live many Years, and rejoice in them all; yet we ought to remember the Days of Darkneſs, for they will be many.* After we have ſatisfied our Appetites with all that is delicious and grateful, we muſt be forced to depart into the next World, and dwell for a long time in the gloomy Chambers of the Grave. Then he upbraids the Follies and Neglects of Young Men, that are immers'd in ſenſual Delights, not thinking of the Day of Judgment, and that great Account that muſt be made hereafter at the Bar of God. And the Preacher concludes his Sermon of the Unſatisfactorineſs and Vanity of all ſenſual tranſitory Things, with this ſerious Application, *Remember thy Creator now in the Days of thy Youth*, &c.

In which Words we may obſerve,

1. The Duty it ſelf, *To remember God.*
2. The Time when it is to be practiſed, *Now, in the Days of Youth.*
3. The Reaſon of this neceſſary Work; *The evil Days will come, and the Years wherein we ſhall have no Pleaſure.*

And theſe together afford us this plain Propoſition.

We ought in our *early Days*, before the Approaches of old Age, to remember God.

In the explaining of which, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you;

I. What is meant by the Remembrance of our Creator.
II. Why we are engaged to this.
III. What ſhould move us to do it in our *early Days.*
IV. What Rules we muſt obſerve, that we may attain this early Remembrance.
V. What will be the good Conſequences that will accompany the Practice of ſo great a Duty.

I. What it is to remember our Creator. It is in all our Religious and Civil Actions before others, and in ſecret, to have an awful, reverential Senſe of God upon our Souls; to acknowledg his rightful Dominion over us, and all

our Actions; to contemplate with delight and wonder, the various Efforts of his Goodneſs, and his innumerable Favours; to be mindful of his Auguſt Preſence, and to attempt nothing that is mean or ſordid; as knowing we are under the ſight of his jealous Eye, *His* that ſees us in all our Retirements and Solitude, *that ponders our Steps*, and has all our private Thoughts, our Words and Actions on Record; to love Him with a ſupream cordial Affection; to hope in his Promiſes; to chuſe him alone as our moſt laſting, valuable, chief Good, to prize his Favour and his Acceptance above all the Friendſhip of Men, and above all the Pleaſures and Delights of Senſe: To imitate (as far as we can) the Loyal Angels, that ſurround his Throne in Poſtures full of Reverence and Submiſſion, that wait to know his Command; and when 'tis once revealed, delay not, but with a ſwift Motion execute his Pleaſure: To obſerve his Laws; to celebrate his Praiſe; to acquieſce in all his Dealings and Procedures with us; to think of Him with the moſt elevated Apprehenſions; to mount as high as we can in our Contemplations of his glorious adorable Excellencies; and then to deſcend and lie low in the humble Senſe of our ſhort ſcanty Thoughts; to make Him the conſtant delightful Object of our Meditation. This is to *remember God*, and is the ſame with being truly Religious, the Mark of all ſincere holy Perſons; whereas, to forget Him, is to be wicked, *and to bear the Stamp of Hell*, Pſal. 9. 17.

II. The ſecond thing in order, is to ſhew what Engagements we are under to remember our Creator.

Firſt, All the Faculties and Powers of our Souls are given us to this end and purpoſe. The great Creator of the World, *has made all things for himſelf*, Prov. 16. 4. and us much more, who as far exceed all inferiour Creatures, as Angels do Men, and the Sun the leſſer Lights. He has beautified our Natures with ſo many Reſemblances of his own glorious Perfections, that we cannot look upon our Frame, but we muſt view the fair Draughts of a kind and skilful Hand; and when we ſee that they exceed all the beſt Eſſays of Art, conclude, they were drawn there by *the Finger of the Lord*, who is upon this account worthy to be remembred. Our Creator has endowed us with a ſprightly Vigor, and a Power of moving beyond all ſenſible exteriour Things, that we may paſs theſe by as too inglorious and mean for our Conſideration, and that when we ſee the World even in its beſt Clothes and Furniture, in all its Pomp and Splendor unable fully to content our Thoughts, we may with a generous Diſdain, act like the Spectators of a better Place; and ſoar as on *Eagles Wings* from theſe low Regions of Unquietneſs and Fear, to the Seat of that *one ſolid and eternal Good*, who can alone ſatisfy the boundleſs Deſires of the Soul, and ought to be the firſt Object of our Choice. Have we a Spirit that is in its ſublime Nature, not only allied to Angels, but to God himſelf? and ſhall we forget our honourable Kindred, or

fix

fix our Minds on theſe Vanities below, when we have a Being that *is all beautiful and lovely* to think upon? Our thinking Powers, and our Affections ſtream'd from his everflowing Goodneſs; and therefore ſhould, like the Rivers that owe their Being to the Sea, make haſte to paſs through the Earth, and return again thither. Wherefore have we this living immaterial Subſtance, this glorious Inhabitant in our earthly Tabernacles ſent from yonder World, but that it may be mindful of its illuſtrious Deſcent, of the Author of its Being, and ſtrive to ſhake off its Chains, and to return to that happy Land again? Wherefore are we aſſigned our abode here, but to be the humble Spectators of our Maker's Wiſdom, and to yield him Praiſe? and that while we ſee the World enriched with ſo many Wonders of the divine Power and Goodneſs, we may contemplate and adore the Creator of it? Our Heaven-born Spirits are deſign'd for a nobler Work, than to gaze upon the ſmall glimmering Appearances of Good and Pleaſure here below; and when we ſee all ſublunary things changing with a continual Viciſſitude, ebbing and flowing, and ſcarcely for one day the ſame; we ought to fix our whole Aim on him that is *unchangeable*, on him that is the *Father of our Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. that when the diſeaſed, crazy World ſhall give up the Ghoſt, will inſpire them with Life and Health, that will clothe them in new Robes, when the *Faſhion of theſe preſent things ſhall paſs away*, 1 Cor. 7. 31. and when this cheating fallacious Earth, and the viſible Heavens themſelves ſhall *wax old, and like a Veſture be changed*, Pſal.

Psal. 102. 26. Shall we not *remember our Creator*, when we have innumerable Instances of his Munificence and Bounty? We are warm'd with his Beams, see with his Light, and shall we either shut our Eyes against him, or turn them to meaner Objects, when we have him always to look upon?

Besides this, the very Frame of our earthly Dwelling, which is so well fitted for all the noble Uses and Operations of the Soul, should engage us to remember that wise Builder, that has in fair and legible Characters, set his own *great Name* upon it; so that he that *runs may read* there the wonderful Wisdom, and the Power of God. This was the Employment of the Royal Prophet, (of all others most devout) when he considered, *that he was fearfully made*, Psal. 139. 14. he breaths out the Desires of an Heart enflamed with sincere Love; *O God, when I awake, I am still with thee*, ver. 18. As soon as ever Sleep left his Eyes, they were lifted up to Heaven, and his Breast was filled with new Meditations of the great Wisdom, and the Power of God. 'The Soul of Man (as one observes) 'is as it were a compendious Statue of the Dei-'ty; her Substance is a solid Effigies of God: 'And therefore as with Ease, we may consider 'the Substance and Motions of the vast Heavens 'on a little Sphere; so we may with like Facili-'ty contemplate the Almighty in this little Me-'dal of God, the Soul of Man.

Secondly, The Care that our Creator takes of us in this World, should engage us to remember him. When he thought fit to tie the Marriage-knot

knot between Mortal and Immortal, the Body and the Soul, like an indulgent kind Father, he before-hand provided all Accommodations that might be for the mutual Comfort of the loving Couple: and is it not fit we ſhould remember ſo great a Benefactor, ſo kind a Friend? He is our Landlord, we his Tenants, that hold all that we have on his Grant: and ſhall we not acknowledg his Dominion and Soveraignty, and pay him with Delight this ſmall and eaſy Tribute? His Love to us *ſurpaſſes the Love of Men or Women.* He lets us ſtill abide in theſe Houſes of Clay, though we run behind and fail in the Payment of that Homage he requires; He bears our Affronts with Patience, he tries us yet longer, whilſt we (ingrateful Creatures!) can find in our Hearts to put off our beſt Friend only with good Words, with fair Promiſes and vain Delays. He prolongs our Days, and gives us more time, when his Juſtice might ere this have ſeiz'd upon us for our Arrears, when we deſerved to be caſt into an eternal Priſon, and to be turn'd out of this World and Heaven both at once. We are fed with his Bread, clothed with his Wool; all our Enjoyments, our Friends, our Health, our Peace, are his Gift; and ought we not to remember the Donor of ſo many Mercies? If the Rain and the Dew moiſten and refreſh the Ground, 'tis for our Good; if the Birds of the Air, and the Beaſts of the Field are maintained by the conſtant Supplies of his Providence, 'tis for us: So that all the Creatures, the Fowls of Heaven, the Fiſhes of the Sea, the Sun, Moon and Stars, that are the Lamps hung upon the Roof of our Dwelling,

to make our Lives the more sweet and comfortable; nay, the Day and the Night, and the several Seasons of the Year *utter their Voice*, Psal. 19. 2. and early and late call upon us *to remember God*. The Language of all our Mercies is this, That our Creator, and their Parent is worthy to be lov'd, and thought upon. And if some of the Eastern Nations paid their early Devotions to the Sun, (as one says) because of its Greatness and Splendor, and Usefulness, in cherishing and ripening the Fruits of the Earth with its kindly Beams, because of its refreshing Heat, and comfortable Light; how should we consecrate the Morning of our Age to God, who made that so bright, so useful, and so glorious a Creature as it is; and is much more by his favourable Influences to every one of us, than the Sun is to the World? He that has been long sick, will remember the Physician, by whose Skill and good Advice he obtain'd a Cure. He that has by the help of his Friend, been freed from a long and tedious Captivity, will all his days, with a thankful Heart, remember that Friend. The Pilgrim will remember him that gives him Entertainment in his Travel; the Poor, his Benefactor; And shall not we then remember our Creator? who when we were fallen among Thieves and Robbers, among the savage Inhabitants of this miserable Place, who had left us, as they thought, for dead, having strip'd us of our Innocence, sent his own Son to heal our Wounds, and to clothe us with the Garments of Salvation? When we were by our own Folly like to languish all our Days in Bondage, and a dark, mournful

State,

State, he ſent the *Angel of the Covenant* to ſtrike off our Chains, and to yield us ſo much of heavenly Light, that we might both ſee who it was that ſet open the Priſon-Door, and where the Way lay that would conduct us to a better Place. When we had ſold our ſelves, he bought us again at a great and dear Price, *The Blood of his own Son*, 1 Pet. 1. 19. When we were poor, he open'd the Treaſures of Heaven to make us rich, and to ſupply our Wants. How frequently then ought we to remember ſuch a God, that when we had turned our ſelves out of Happineſs, was willing to ſheath his flaming Sword, and to let us enter into the Joys of a better Paradiſe, than that which was the Seat of our firſt Parents? That ſent us the News of Pardon, when we were condemned by the Sentence of the Law, even when Satan was leading us away to Execution, and when we deſerved to die?

III. The third General to be ſpoken of, is, to ſhew what neceſſity there is that we ſhould *remember our Creator now in the Days of our Youth*. And this will be evident, when we have conſidered theſe two things.

Firſt, *We know not but before the Days of old Age, Death may cut us off*. There be many young Men that are now paſt all help, and have ſet in Darkneſs, that might have been ſhining among the Stars above, had they not been over-perſwaded by the Devil, to neglect their God, through the hopes of a long and eaſy Life; that would never believe they were in danger, till it came like an *armed* Man; never believe they ſhould leave the World,

World, till they were seiz'd with the last Agonies and Pains of Death. We are now in health, but do we know how soon a mortal incurable Distemper may seize upon us? We are now travelling on the Road, but do we know when we shall arrive at our *long Home*, and conclude our Journey? Now we are in the number of the Living, but e're long may increase the number of the Dead, and add some Unites more to the Weekly Bills. We should *remember our Creator now*, for the next Moment is not our own; our Life is a *Dream*, or *Vision of the Night*, Job 20. 8. that is posses'd with strange Delusions; that when we awake to a serious Thoughtfulness of what is our real Interest, pass away, and are not remembred with Delight any more. *Our Days on Earth are as a Shadow* that will vanish, when the Sun is either gone down, or when 'tis wrapp'd in the Mantle of a thick Cloud. Though in Youth and in the sprightliness and vigour of your Spirits, you think the Grave is at a mighty distance, yet you may at this very time, when you imagine that you have many years to live, be very near an eternal World: You are made of the same frail and decaying Constitution that others are; your Lusts, your Pleasures and Diversions, that cause you to forget God, will not deliver you from Sickness and Death, but cause them to advance with a more hasty pace: For ought you know you are now living your last Month or Year: How do you know but God may snatch you away with an unavoidable and a sudden Stroak? How quickly may the Flower wither that you doat upon? And that well-adorned indulged Body of

yours,

yours, that affects nothing but what is neat and gay and handsom, turn to Putrefaction and to filthy Dust? And what if you should die with all the Lusts and Sins of a licentious Age unpurged away, they will not only lie down with you in the Dust, but rise again with you at the great Day. Though we are now at ease in these Cottages of Clay, yet we are here only by Permission, and during the Pleasure of our Lord; but when our Lease will expire, or the Day of our Departure come, we know not. It is by the unalterable Decrees of God *appointed for us all once to die*, Heb. 9. 27. but we that are forbidden to pry into the Arcana's of his secret Counsels, know not when that Statute, that was made because of our Sin, shall be put in execution, and take both our Lives and Goods away. Now we have pitch'd our Tents, but are not certain when the Orders will be issued out for us to remove into another Place. Now the Body and the Soul, like two loving Friends, dwell in Peace together; but they must part, one into the Grave, and the other into a Country that is at a far distance, which we never saw. We are Citizens here only by the Grant of our Creator; and while we flatter our selves, as if the Priviledges and Immunities of this bodily State were long-liv'd, he may take away our Charter. We are Pilgrims wandring to and fro, but with his Pass, and he alone knows how long it shall bear its Date. It is time for us all now *to remember God*; for in the midst of all the Pleasures and Delights of Life, we are near to the Sorrows of the Grave. Our Souls must go when he calls; and how shall we be

able

able to look him in the Face, if we ſhould be cited to his Bar, while we remain in a careleſs, delatory Poſture? Let none then ſay, That on the Morrow, or in the next Week, or the next Year, I will *remember God*; for your *Thoughts may periſh*, and you may be dead before. While you linger, the Cloud that is but ſmall at preſent, may ſwell into a huge bulk, and diſſolve in a mighty Storm; while you are idle, the Glaſs runs; and e're long the Clock that warns you to ariſe betimes, and mind your God, and your Souls, will ſtrike its laſt, and then the Door will be ſhut. We ſhould ſpend our *youthful Days* in a ſerious delightful Contemplation of the Deity, in a vigorous quick March to the Land of Glory; not knowing but in one minute, in one hour more, Death with his large Train of Terrors may beat up our Quarters; and, while we ſuſpect no Ill, carry us captive to the dark Priſon of the Grave. None of us have received a Protection to ſecure us from the Arreſt and Violence of a *ſudden Death*.

As the *ten Virgins* were called in their ſlumber, and at *Midnight* (*Mat.* 25. 5, 6.) ſo God has neither promiſed, nor is obliged to ſend us a Summons by a long tedious Sickneſs, or by ſharp Pains, before we make our Appearance at his Tribunal, where we ſhall by an irrevocable Sentence be adjudged to Bliſs or Woe. If we then hope for a Place in Glory, we *muſt now remember God*. The Work, if we expect Eternal Happineſs, muſt once be done, why ſhould it not then commence in our beſt Time? ſuch is the Time of Youth. If we delay to another Seaſon, are we ſure that will come? or that we ſhall not be cal-

led

led out of the Vineyard, when we thought to have *wrought out our Salvation with fear and trembling?* 'Tis fit our Eyes should now be fix'd on our *Creator*; for we know not how soon these Windows will be shut in, and a thick Night of Darkness come upon us. When we think our *Mountain* settled on durable Foundations that *will not be removed*, an Earthquake may come and throw it, and us both, out of our Place. We may be on the brink of Ruin when we think it is far off. So has many a Ship sail'd with a prosperous and favourable Gale (the Mariners rejoycing) till it immediately split upon a Rock, and was dash'd in pieces. While we go fearless along, our earthen Vessel may by some unexpected Accident fall and crack; then all our Hopes of long Life will be as *Water spilt upon the Ground*, and not be fit for Service any more.

Secondly; *We ought to remember our Creator now in the Days of our Youth; for when the evil Days, the Days of old Age come*, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to perform well so great a Work. By delaying, we twist much harder the Cords of our Iniquity, which now might be snapt asunder with an easy Labour. If we now surrender to the Devil, and once give him Possession, he will scarce be forc'd out again with all our after-Pains. Is it now so laborious an Enterprize to conquer Sin? and will it not be much more so, when it shall, by our Neglect and Forgetfulness of God, obtain fresh Auxiliaries and Supplies, even from our own Garisons, and fight against us with greater Violence? If one single Sin put a serious Christian, when he is young,

young, and most fit to manage the spiritual Armour, to so much Pain and Trouble, to so many sad Hours Tears and Prayers; to how much greater Labour will they be expos'd, that shall have as many Sins to combate with, as the Hours, the Days, and the Weeks they have lived on Earth? If we find it difficult to wrestle with these Enemies in their Infancy, how do we think to gain the Victory, when they are grown to a full Stature, and a more formidable Power? Have we not long enough already slighted the just and equitable Laws of God? Or shall we, in despite of all his Warnings, the Motions of his Holy Spirit, and the Checks of our own Consciences, still be rebellious and do the same? Those that begin soonest, are *but hardly saved*; and do we think to accomplish our Journey well, though we set out for Heaven but in the Evening of the Day? Do we think to be Candidates for Glory at last, if till the Night come we spend our Strength in the way that leads to Ruin? Is it not better to quench the Fire at the first, than to stay till it grow to a mighty Flame, and scorn all the Methods we can use to quench it? Is it not better to seek an Antidote against that Poison which we have imbibed, because it was pleasant, and gilded over, than to stay till it seize our vital Parts, and our Case will admit of no Remedy? Is it prudent or safe, not to endeavour to act our Part well till we are just going off the Stage? not to think of walking in the Ways of God, till we are taking our last Step, and which will set us within the next World? Do we expect to take our Voyage well

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in Winter, when we have by our Careleſſneſs let the Summer Seaſon paſs away? Do we think, when our Eyes are blind with Age, that we cannot find our way home without a Guide, that we ſhall be able, in the midſt of Darkneſs, to find our Way to Glory? Or that when our Hands will be ſeized with a trembling Palſy, that we *can lay hold on Eternal Life?* 1 Tim. 6. 12. What Benefit ſhall we have by the Manna that comes down from Heaven, if we cannot go out and gather it, though it be ſcattered at the Door of our Tent? Do we think to call upon God well, when we ſhall hardly have Strength enough left to tell our Friends that we are ill; or to fetch a Groan, when *the Clouds return after the Rain*, Eccleſ. 12. 2. and when one Trouble is hardly gone till a worſe come? Can we draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation, when the *Silver Cord will be looſed, and the Pitcher broken at the Fountain?* Verſ. 6. Do we think we ſhall be pleaſing to God, when we ſhall be tedious to others, and weary of our ſelves, and *have no Pleaſure in the Years of our Life?* Or, can we believe that when we have been all our days crippled with Sin, he will for our Cure work Miracles? or when we have ſcorned his Ambaſſadors in ordinary, that he will give Commiſſion to his Angels to treat with us, or to deſcend upon the *Waters?* Can we expect a plentiful Harveſt at laſt from that Ground, which we have ſuffered to lie untill'd; and which, like the Field of the Sluggard, *will be all grown over with Thorns*, Prov. 24. 31. becauſe we did not, through the fear of ſome little Trouble, in the proper Seaſon, throw Seed upon it? Few arrive in old Age to be famous Artiſts or good Scholars, that

did not begin to learn, and practise the Rules of Art long before; and do we think to be well skilled in the Matters of Religion, and to learn our Duty towards God, when all our Strength is gone? When our Ears will be stopt from the Exercise of their proper Office; when our Eyes shall scarce see to read, and our Memories shall be weak and frail? How shall we receive Instruction, and remember God, when it may be we shall forget one day the Actions and Passages of the former. You can never expect a fitter Season wherein to remember God than now; if you stay longer, the Terms of Salvation will still be the same; the Law by which you are to be judged, its Promises and Threatnings, will be the same. *Seek the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near*, Isa. 55. 6. And *Wisdom* says, *Those that seek me early, shall find me*, Prov. 8. 17. You must speedily break off your Acquaintance with your most familiar and dearest Sins, if you would have your Creator to be your Friend: Why should you not oppose your most zealous Endeavours to their subtile Insinuation, and betimes prevent their further growth, seeing if you expect Salvation, they must once be rooted up? Your Conversion will be much more easy now, than when the number of your Sins is swelled to a great Sum, and when your Hearts have been stupified and hardned with repeated Acts of the same Sins. You have now an Activity and Strength of Body, a Sprightliness and a Vigour in your Minds, that will enable you to labour and to be diligent; but the unavoidable Weaknesses of a decaying Age, will not allow you so good an Opportunity. Why

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ſhould you not now begin your Holy Warfare, rather than to ſtay till you are ſuperannuated? The Spring is the Seaſon wherein we hope to ſee the Earth flouriſh, and not when 'tis covered with the Snow of Winter. Invert not the Order of Nature, nor think to work better in the Evening than in the Morning of the Day; nor to be Sowing when it is the time of Harveſt. In Youth you think it too ſoon to repent, and in old Age it may be too late. You even now have many things to do for God and your own Souls, and the good of others: Many Iniquities you have already to bewail and ſtrive againſt. You have even now many ſtrong and violent Paſſions to mortify and conquer. You have even now a great many Graces to obtain, and a great many Truths to learn. You have a great way to go, abundance of Enemies to grapple with; and can you hope to do all your hard Work better in the Diſeaſes and Failures of old Age, than in the Prime and Flower of ſtrong and healthful Youth? 'Tis an abſurd and prepoſterous Courſe, to put off the Matters of your Souls ſo long, as it would be to ſee a Man bind himſelf Apprentice, when by the Courſe of Nature he is near to the Grave; and to begin the World, when his Time is at an End; or as abſurd as to ſee a Man opening his Shop, when others are ſhutting in; or to begin to Labour when others go to Reſt. Thoſe that have made the beſt Obſervation of the State of Men, tell us, That they have known few, very few converted when they were Old; and that they had reaſon to believe they were ſuch that had ſinned before in Ignorance, and did not wil-

fully put off Repentance, when they were convinced that they ought to turn to God. For as to thoſe for whom God deſigns Mercy and Salvation, he uſually takes poſſeſſion of their Hearts betimes, before they have been much defiled with the Pollutions of the World, and before they have long abuſed his Grace, and grieved his Spirit by unreaſonable Delays. Our Youth cannot be too ſoon honour'd with Religion, and the ſerious conſideration of another World. We cannot too ſoon quit our Vanities, and be in earneſt for our Souls: When we are Sick, we think we cannot too ſoon be Recovered: When we are in Danger, we think the moſt early and the quickeſt Deliverance to be the beſt. And can we too ſoon be freed from the Fear of Hell, from the Bondage of the Devil, and from the Power of Sin? If we *flouriſh not in the Courts of God* now, we cannot hope *to bring forth Fruit in old Age*, Pſal.92.14. or when the Froſt or ſharp Weather comes. Do we think we ſhall be a ſweet ſmelling Savour in the Noſtrils of God, when we offer him *the Torn, the Maimed, and the Sick*, (Mal.1.13.) our feeble languiſhing Deſires, when we ſhould have devoted to his Service the firſt-born of our Thoughts? Will he accept the ſmall Remainders and Gleanings of the Vintage, when we have offered our firſt-Fruits, our beſt and early Days to the Fleſh, the Devil, and the World? Would that Perſon meet with a pleaſing Entertainment, who after he had long fought in the Army of a Rebel, ſhould come at laſt to lay himſelf at the Feet of his own Prince, when he is Maimed and Decrepit, and not any more

more fit for Service? or rather would he not meet with ſevere Frowns and Checks, and be ſent away with ſuch Language as this, Go Traitor, go, and receive thy Wages of thoſe for whom thou haſt brought upon thy ſelf my juſt Anger, and a large Train of Miſeries? And will not the Glorious God (who is more tender of his Honour than earthly Kings of theirs) caſt us off hereafter, if we ſhould think to find Favour in his Sight, after we have ſerv'd in the Wars of Satan, and done all we could againſt him? Would he not ſay, Go now to your Sins, to your ancient Maſters, the Devil and the World, and ſee what Help they will now give you, whom you choſe to ſerve rather than Me your proper Soveraign? Now indeed our Creator calls, but if we delay much longer, he may go away in Wrath, and not return again. Now he waits to ſee if we will repent; but e're long *his Hand will take hold of Vengeance, he will whet his glittering Sword*, (Deut. 32. 41.) ariſe to vindicate his Honour, and not extend his Scepter any more. Let us think of our Creator now, leſt *we mourn at laſt, when our Fleſh and Bodies are conſumed, and ſay, How we have hated Inſtruction, and our Heart deſpiſed Reproof, and have not obeyed the Voice of our Teachers, nor inclin'd our Ear to them that inſtructed us?* Prov. 5. 11, 12, 13. If we ſin away the Days of our Youth, in old Age God will diſregard our Cries; nor will he at our Deſire make our Sun ſtand ſtill, (as it did once in the Vale of *Gibeon*) till we have conquered all our ſpiritual Enemies. Let us now then *remember our Creator* whilſt we may do it with Com-

fort, and with Hope; and not ſtay till we be environ'd with Swarms of vexatious Thoughts and hideous Reflections, that will continually ſting our forſaken guilty Souls. If like *Eſau*, we hunt all the days of our Strength after Pleaſure, when we come home at Night, that is, arrive to old Age, we ſhall be deprived of all our Hopes, and meet with a miſerable Diſappointment; for thoſe that ſerved their God firſt, though they were younger than we, will carry away the Bleſſing which is not to be recovered; for though *we ſeek it as he did carefully with Tears, yet we may like him find no place of Repentance*, Heb. 12. 17. then we ſhall be baptized in our own Sorrows, and called by our proper Name, *Fooliſh Children*. Our Sins, our Burdens are already great enough; let us not then cry for more Weight, unleſs we deſire to be preſs'd down to the lower Hell.

Thirdly, The early Remembrance of God will make you very ſerviceable, you will change your Work, and bring all the Zeal and Warmth and Fervour that you imployed in Sin, and place it upon better Objects, and accompliſh great things for your Maker, when you betimes quit the Snares of Satan and the World; whereas you would but have little Leiſure and leſs Strength, if you ſhould ſtay to the Concluſion of your Age; your Converſation being ſeaſoned with an early Religion, will ſhine more and more with a freſh Luſtre: and the Sight of your Holineſs will ſhame the Vitiouſneſs and Profaneneſs of thoſe who have lived as long as you, but have not ſo well improved their time. How will you flouriſh when you have grown long by the River-ſide?

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and how will it upbraid the Cowardice and Backwardneſs of others, when they ſee you conquer Sin, and reſiſt the Devil? And thus while other young Men are by the Diſorders of a bad Example drawing others into Miſery, you will encourage your Acquaintance to walk with you in the way of Heaven; and it will ſhame thoſe that are old Sinners when they ſee that the Multitude of their Years has not taught them ſo much as you have attained to in a leſs ſpace; it will make them bluſh to think how much more you have done than they, though they have had a longer Life and greater Opportunities: And though you are much inferiour in your Experience in the World, yet you will be much more honourable for your Judgment in things of an higher Nature, and for your early Piety, according to the Comment of a Rabbin upon that place; *Your young Men ſhall ſee Viſions, and your old Men dream Dreams*: you ſhall be admitted to a nearer Converſe with God than thoſe that are old, becauſe a Viſion is a clearer Revelation than a Dream.

Fourthly, This early Remembrance of God will furniſh you with large Experiences of his Goodneſs, and your Graces will be very ſtrong, when you may ſay with *David*, Pſal. 71. *ver.* 5, *and* 17, 18. *O Lord, thou haſt taught me from my Youth, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous Works. Now alſo when I am old and gray-headed, forſake me not.* As early riſing is good for Health; ſo you will find your Souls more lively, by beginning to ſerve God in Youth. O how many and how precious to your Thoughts will be the Remembrance of the ſweet and holy Motions of the Spirit that

you have entertained! With what Contempt will you look upon all the Joys of the World, when you have had so many fore-tastes of Heaven? How boldly and with what Faith will you pray, when you remember how often your Prayers have been heard, and your Wants relieved? With what Patience will you bear Afflictions, when you remember how often the Love of the God that you early sought has made many a former Cross to be Light, and has enabled you to pass through many a sore and bitter Trial? You must needs be rich in Grace, for you will have a Treasure of Experiences, to which you may repair in all your straits; and as your *outward Man decays, the inward will grow and be renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. And what an Ease and Pleasure will it be to your Minds to have had all your chief Business dispatched betimes? It concerns us to be gracious in our Youth, for the time of Age with its Weakness and Diseases, will need all the Grace that we can possibly get all our Life before.

Fifthly, *You ought to remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth*; for otherwise he may be provoked to cut your Lives sooner off. Why should you imagine that he will suffer you to stand long in his Vineyard, if you bring forth no Fruit, which is answerable to the Pains that he takes for your good? Can you rationally expect many pleasant and healthful days to come, that have spent in meer trifling and in Disobedience so great a part of your former Life? Can you expect that your Creator should feed and maintain and preserve you, that you may be more capable

pable to offend him, and to reſiſt his Authority, and oppoſe his Government? Would your Prince ſupply rebellious Subjects from his Magazines, or furniſh them with Arms and Proviſions to fight againſt his own Crown and Dignity? Do you think that God will ſupport your Faculties, and hold your Souls in Life, that you may ſide with his Enemies, and be more enabled to gratify your Luſts? Will he always look on your Extravagancies and Follies as an unconcerned Spectator, when by every act of Sin, you break his Laws, and ſlight his Juſtice, his Goodneſs, his Patience, and his Holineſs? Muſt he ſtill renew your Time and Youth, that you may renew your Sins? Muſt the great God of Heaven be always patient, and let you alone, whilſt his Name is diſhonoured, and his Glory obſcured by your Provocations? Muſt you abuſe him to his Face, and ſcorn the Calls of Chriſt, the Offers of his Goſpel, and the kind Methods of his Love, and do you think he will take no notice at all of theſe Indignities and Affronts? You your ſelves would not regard and favour one that ſhould continually vex and grieve you, and act againſt your Intereſt: And muſt he pour Oil into the Lamp of Life, and make it to ſhine with a brighter Flame, that you may ſport and dally with the Light which is given you to far greater Purpoſes? By your Forgetfulneſs of him you deſerve to loſe the Bleſſings of his Providence; and if you continue ſtill to forget him, you may cauſe him to contract your Days, which if well improved might be extended to a longer Date.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, *By our Baptism we are obliged to remember our Creator*; by that we are engaged to renounce the World, the Devil, and the Flesh; and if by forgetting him we admire that World, and gratify that Devil, and pamper that Flesh, we abjure our Master, and break our Vow, and by so doing disclaim all our Interest in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: By this we perjure and destroy our selves, we alienate our Hearts from God, which are his due, and by a Sacriledg inexcusable, turn what should be sacred to a profane and common Use; and we can be no other than Hypocrites when we call our selves Christians. By forgetting God in the midst of so many Advantages that we have to promote our Remembrance of him, we make our Condition more deplorable than the Condition of Heathens, who never named the Name of Jesus. To what purpose do we call him Lord, if we never think upon him, and spend more Thoughts and Time in the gratifying of our Lusts, than we do for his Glory? and if the Pleasure of our sinful Inclinations have a greater Power over us than the Prospect and Hope of his Rewards? The Name of Christ which we bear, and the hope we have of Salvation, lays a delightful Necessity on us to be obedient when he commands; and as in Baptism we have vowed a sincere and universal Obedience to him, so we must not think to put him off with a fruitless Profession, nor bear traiterous Hearts, nor hold a Correspondence with his Enemies, whilst we are listed under his Banners, are entertained at his own charge, and wear his Livery; for by this means we shall lose all the Benefits

fits of the Covenant of Grace. If we forget God, we do as it were tear our Charter, ſell our Birth-right, and loſe all the Priviledges which we have by being born of Chriſtian Parents.

Seventhly, *The Remembrance of your Creator in the Days of Youth*, will keep you from thoſe Luſts and Vices by which other young People are moſt frequently overcome: and ſeveral of theſe I ſhall mention to you: as,

1. *Young Perſons are generally inclined to gratify their ſenſual Appetites without Reſtraint*, and are uſually more addicted to take Care of that which relates to their Bodies, than of that which is for the Welfare of their ſpiritual and immortal part: Whatſoever pleaſes their Eyes, that they look upon, not making a Covenant with theſe Enemies on the Frontiers, as *Job* did: Whatſoever is muſical or delightful, that they hear, though it be vitious and profane: Whatſoever has the Appearance of a preſent Good and Satisfaction, that they deſire. Theſe young People are governed more by Imagination than by Reaſon, more by Senſe than by Faith; and hence it is that they lie open to every Temptation, and what is charming, gains their Hearts: They are eaſily ſurprized with any thing that has the Face of Pleaſure; they conſider not what its Period is, and how it will be Bitterneſs in the latter end. This unwatchful Age of Youth is quickly allured with what is airy and jocoſe and merry, but not moved with that which is grave and ſerious; they value things more by the glittering of their outſide, than becauſe of their inward and real Worth: Whatſoever is near,

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doth affect them, the Pomp and Glory of this World; but the Matters of another World, becauſe of their greater Diſtance, are ſeldom or very coldly thought upon. Young People are mightily taken with all thoſe things that flatter and gratify their Senſes, and being but at a little diſtance from Childhood, they admire whatſoever is gay and fine, though in it ſelf light and inconſiderable, ſuch as Beauty and rich Clothes, and a good Grace, and a genteel Behaviour, and a diverting Humour; and ſpend the chiefeſt part of their time to ſet themſelves off to be admired by others, for that which they themſelves moſt admire: Thus it is in their Inclinations and their Carriage; when they ſpeak, 'tis after a vain and unprofitable manner; when they read, they are thoſe Books that are full of Stories and pleaſant Narrations; and ſo they delight, they examine not whether they be true or falſe. When they viſit, 'tis the Company that is jovial and brisk, ſuch as entertain them with Merriment and Jeſts, with Sports or News, or ſome other ways of eaſy Diverſion to paſs their time away: They dread every thing that is ſad and melancholy, and know nothing better than to eat and drink, and to rejoice; and in all theſe they are immoderate; and this Immoderateneſs and Exceſs produces a multitude of luſtful and impure Inclinations, which being once kindled, they are ſo far from quenching the dangerous Flame, that with new Exceſſes they blow it up to a greater heighth, and know no greater Miſery than to be reſtrained from whatſoever their licentious Appetites deſire. Thus they are chief-

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ly buſied about Trifles and Superfluities, either about ſuch things as are leſs neceſſary, or ſuch as are impertinent; and thus their Youth, as well as their Childhood, is Vanity, *Eccleſ.* 11. 10. But now the remembrance of God, and of the Holineſs and Juſtice of his Laws, and the Severity of his Puniſhments, will awe their Spirits, and keep them from running to that exceſs of Riot, to which others proceed that have no ſenſe of their Creator: the Thoughts of him will make them grave, and ſerious, and conſiderate, and take off their Minds from the Trifles and Vanities of the preſent World.

2. *Another Sin of which young People are generally guilty, is their high Opinion of themſelves.* They are uſually obſtinate in their own apprehenſions, and deride the Advice of their Parents or Governors, and are unwilling to be reproved: like the Prodigal Son, they think they are able enough to guide and manage their own Affairs, and are deaf and ſullen to all the Rules that are preſcribed by others; and with ſcorn and laughter paſs by the grave Advices of ſuch as are aged, and more experienced; and their Pride makes them to believe that they know as much as they. Thus the young Scholar, after the reading a few Books, and a little taſte of polite Learning, thinks he knows as much as the greateſt Critick or Philoſopher. Thus the young Apprentice after a very few Years Service, thinks he ſees as much into all the Myſteries of Trade and Buſineſs as his Maſter does; and this is the cauſe that they ſuffer ſo many Shipwracks in their after-Life, becauſe they truſt to their own Conduct, and put

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their Veſſel out to Sea, before they have learned the true grounds of Navigation. Thus young People by a flattering conceit of their own Prudence, Wiſdom and Knowledg, become undutiful to their Parents, and unteachable, and perverſe, and obſtinate; and though they wander, will not be perſwaded that they are in the wrong Path; though they are deceived, they will not be brought humbly to confeſs or retract their Error: and the natural heat of their Spirits, join'd with the good opinion they have of their own Abilities, ſtupifies and intoxicates their Brains; and they regard not what others ſay for their Welfare, becauſe they are drunk with their own violent and irregular Paſſions; and they are apt to deſpiſe the Old, and ſuch as are in Affliction, *Job* 30. 1, 12, 14. Hence it is that young Perſons are contentious and quarrelſom, peeviſh and ungovernable; and think that they are fit to be Judges of what is good or evil, convenient or inconvenient, before they have well learned the right Terms of Law. They think they ſee the full Evidence of things at the firſt view, and at a diſtance, as much as they that have laboured in the purſuit of Knowledg many years, and have enjoyed more Advantages, a longer time, and greater Helps than they have had. Thus when they live at home, they are Thorns and Briars in the Sides of their Parents; when they are abroad, they are every where troubleſom and uneaſy: And when any of theſe with their unmortified Pride, and high Opinion, enter into the ſacred Miniſtry, they are Incendiaries and Dividers of the Church. Thus by an early Prejudice againſt

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others, and through the power of Self-conceit, they prevent all future Information, and ſhut out the Beams of a brighter and clearer Light, which ſhines upon all thoſe that are humble and ſubmiſſive, and willing to be taught: And without their Arrogance and Pride, they might with their growing Years find a growing and more certain Knowledg; and their ſecond Thoughts, and their elder and more mature Apprehenſions would be much better than the firſt. They are uſually full of Boaſting and Self-confidence, and upon a ſlight performance of ſome few Duties of Religion, think they have made a mighty Progreſs in it, like the Perſon mentioned, *Mat.* 19. 20. Thus being *Novices, and lifted up with Pride, they fall into the Snare of the Devil*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. Whereas a ſerious remembrance of God, would fill them with ſhame and bluſhing for their Sins; it would ſhew them their own Weakneſs and Inability to do what is good, and cauſe them to liſten to the Exhortations of God, and to be very willing to take the Advice and Help of their Parents and Teachers.

3. *Another Luſt of Youth is Raſhneſs and Precipitance:* They think not long before they reſolve, they are hot and violent in their Deſires, they are bold and forward, and eager to accompliſh what they firſt ſet upon, though it be never ſo irregular and ſinful: they know little, and they fear leſs; they want Experience, and rarely ſee Effects in their Cauſes, and Events in their Prognoſticks: and they are unwilling to confeſs the poverty of their Experience, by borrowing Counſel of others. Thus they run with a too-

eager

eager haſte on the moſt deſperate Deſigns; their natural Vivacity and Sprightlineſs makes them incapable of long Deliberations; they are deſtitute of that Warineſs, and thoſe neceſſary Doubts that attend the colder and the ſlower motions of a riper Age. Hence it is that young People are heady and inconſiderate, and unthoughtful of a coming Danger: they look with a careleſs eye on the beginning of a Deſign, and have no proſpect of its Period and Concluſion: With a very quick glance they ſlide away upon the ſuperficies, but pierce not into the depth of Things, and ſo are betrayed to a thouſand Inconveniencies, becauſe they did not muſe long enough upon that which they firſt undertook; hence it is that they ſeldom learn to be wiſe, till they have ſorely ſmarted for their Folly; ſeldom are well-skill'd in any work, till they have bought their Experience at too dear a rate; they are too impetuous and haſty, and are generally moſt timerous where they ſhould have the moſt Courage, and are moſt bold and daring where they ſhould moſt fear and tremble: and thus they are hurried away into the greateſt Extravagancies, to gratify and pleaſe their own Will and Appetite; thus their Paſſions are ſtrong, and their Reaſon weak; and this Weakneſs is not aſſiſted with the ſtrength and influence of Religion, and therefore all their Actions want that Compleatneſs and Succeſs they ought to have. But to this Evil alſo the remembrance of God will put a mighty ſtop; for it will make them ſtayed and ſolid, and to know that they are deſigned for an eternal State; and as they chuſe well or ill now, ſo it is like to fare with them for

ever;

ever; and upon such a Knowledg they must needs be very cautious in what they attempt and resolve upon, seeing an Eternity of Happiness or Misery is concerned in it.

4. *Another Lust of young Persons is their fooliſh and carnal Hopes.* They have been but a little while in the World, and all things appear very fine and attractive: The Morning of their Age is clouded with many Mists, which gives them but an obscure and imperfect Sight: All their Design is to rise and to be great, and they fancy they are able to accomplish what they design, because they have a continued Strength and Vigor, and have met with few Disappointments; whereas those that are aged, see that all the things that glister in their Eyes, are but painted Vanities: but young People are easily led aside with Ambition, Applause and Vain-glory, not considering that those that are most exalted, are but as so many Weather-cocks to let others see how the Wind sits; and are exposed to more Storms and Trouble than such as are seated in a low degree: They enter into the World as unexperienced Sailors into a calm Sea, but know not the Rocks and Dangers that attend them in the Voyage, nor how soon the Face of the smiling Heaven may frown, and they be cast away. The briskness and fervour of young Men fires their boiling Blood, and renders them restless and uneasy with their present Circumstances, and makes them hope before they die to be great Men. They are very sollicitous for what they call Honour and Reputation; they know not how to yield, or to bear Affronts or ill Usage; and are quickly stir-

red up to Revenge, to Murders, to Duels, or whatever else the Devil sets their Inclinations upon. They cannot bear reproach; and, like all others, even when they are dull, they would be thought witty; and when they are deformed, would be thought beautiful. They cannot bear to see others, though of more Worth, preferr'd before them; and Envy rages in their Breasts, as among *Joseph*'s Brethren, when he had a greater share in their Father's Love: and they are apt to use Lies and evil Arts and Dissimulations, to cover their wicked Enterprizes, as these Persons impos'd upon the poor mournful old Man with a false Story, *Gen.* 37. 18. but the remembrance of God will teach them that there is nothing worthy of their Hopes or Desires, but his Acceptance, and the Glory that he hath promised.

5. *Another youthful Lust is Prodigality.* They do usually grudg at no Expences they are at for their Meat or Drink, for their Clothes or Entertainments, and their costly Recreations. They are enslaved to their Sensualities, and so like other Slaves, all the Mony that they get goes to support their Master-Lust. They love merry Company, and such as feed and drink at a very plentiful rate, and squeeze their Purses to spread the Table, and to fill the Cup. Their Sins have gained their Hearts, and will not be divorced; and when they are so, because they are expensive, they sue for Alimony, and so they take them home again. They spend as long as the old Stock lasts, and when that is gone, they use some unlawful way of Theft, or Robbery, or Cheating, or Coining, to reimburse themselves, and set up

for

for ſufficient Hectors again, till at laſt their Credit, their Reputation, their Health, their Lives, their Souls go away together. Thus young Men know not what it coſt their Fathers to get a competent Eſtate, what Labours, what Toils, what Cares, what perplexing Thoughts they underwent, even moderately to ſupply their Neceſſities, and to live in any tolerable Faſhion: and not knowing theſe, they ſpend in a few Days what the Trading and Care of their aged Parents did not but in the ſpace of many Years heap together. Now the remembrance of their Creator would make them know that they have nothing but what is his Gift, and nothing that they have is their own, but his; and that for every Talent, for their Strength, their Time, their Money, and whatever elſe they enjoy, they muſt be anſwerable at the great Day.

6. *Another youthful Luſt, is, the being eaſily enticed to what is evil.* Young Men naturally abhor Privacy, and Retirement, and Solitude, and generally their Sins are ſo many, and their Conſciences ſo laden with Guilt, that they care not to be alone, and ſo are very yielding and complaiſant to thoſe that are of the ſame Age and Temper. They are quickly wheedled and deceived, firſt drawn into Company with the hopes of innocent Diverſion, and free and liberal Converſation; and that the Converſation may not languiſh, they quicken it with the ſprightly Wine, and thoſe reliſhing Bits that give it a better and a more grateful taſte: and thus they learn to drink, and then learn the Trade of their Companions, to draw in others to the ſame Work,

and receive all Impreſſions that are evil from their Aſſociates; and by their Gluttonies, and Exceſs, and Intemperateneſs, grow unchaſte and wicked, and plot how to ſucceed in their impious Projects; and becauſe it will not be brib'd to countenance their Licentiouſneſs, they laugh at all Religion, and forget God, that they may the ſooner forget themſelves. Thus they ſwim down the Stream, and are carried away like Straws and Rubbiſh on the moving Tide; and becauſe they will not pray, nor keep the Sabbath, nor read the Bible, nor regulate their Lives by it, deride thoſe that do ſo; and then young Men are ſoon led away with Error. This Age is affected with what is pompous and ſhining; and the gawdy Shadows of Falſhood ſtrike their Senſes more than the Simplicity and Plainneſs of Truth; and being very tender and pliable, they are eaſily bent this way or that; they are *like Children toſt to and fro with every blaſt of Wind*, Epheſ. 4. 14. and becauſe they are not well fixed, they are quickly rooted up. Thus the Natures of young People are full of Tinder and combuſtible Matter, and no ſooner does the Devil ſhoot one of his fiery Darts, but they are put into a Flame; no ſooner is a Temptation ſent to viſit them, but they bid it welcome, not conſidering the dangerous Errand that it comes upon. Whereas the Remembrance of God would be a conſtant check upon them, and make them to value one Hour's Communion with him in fervent holy Prayer, more than a thouſand Days ſpent in worldly Joys: It would teach them to aſſociate themſelves with thoſe that would give them a good Example and good

Advice,

Advice, and help to prepare them for an eternal State.

7. *Another Lust of Youth is the changeableness of their Purposes and Resolutions.* They like things that are new, new Opinions, new Preachers, new Truths: the first dawning of the Light of Spiritual Knowledg they find to be comfortable and refreshing, but when they find that it will not allow their old Customs, and their old Sins, they shut their eyes, and put it out again: they are soon weary, and the Truth that at first was entertained with Joy, is dismiss'd for an old Lust that they were before acquainted with: They consider not that in the same God, the same Christ, the same Promises, the same hope of Heaven, the truly Religious find a greater Pleasure, and a more grateful Variety, than they do in all the ways of Sin; for though the Path they tread be the same, yet they meet with new Joys, with new Comforts in every Day's Travel on the blessed Road, and after the largest Experience, will have no cause to change their Journey, nor to take another Course: but it is with most young Men in the Matters of a serious nature, as in their common Affairs; they are quickly warm'd and transported, and quickly cold again; they soon resolve, and soon break their Resolutions; they are soon familiar and acquainted, and as soon change their Friendships and Acquaintance; they admire to day what they will hate to morrow; what they praise to day, to morrow may be the subject of their Scorn and Raillery; they quickly nauseate what before pleased their Palates; the heat of their Imagination keeps them from

being solid and long in the same Mind; they are for new Attempts and Recreations, they delight to be unconstrained, to ramble, and to range to and fro. Thus Young People are full of Waverings, unsteady and unresolved in their Thoughts, pleased with Shadows and Appearances, delighted with Changes, though from the better to the worse. O what a vain Season is the Time of Youth! how foolish are our Hopes, and how mean our Projects! All the early Age, without the Grace of God, is but as one continued Romance, full of false Ideas, ungrounded Hopes, and that makes us strangely passionate and concerned for the representation of Things that never were but in the delusion of our own Minds. But now the remembrance of this God, will discover to them his glorious Excellencies and Perfections, the fresh view of which will every moment yield them a Circulation of Delight, and they will never desire to change him for any other Object, for in Him they will meet with all that is truly desirable; and in Him they will have always enough of Joy and Comfort.

8. Another Lust of Youth is, *their averseness to Labour, and their love of Idleness.* Hence it is that an implicit Faith is very grateful to such, for it is easy to take things upon Trust, whereas a long time is required, and great pains, to have a Faith that is rational and well-grounded. Young Men are apt to be satisfied with Ignorance, because Knowledg lies deep, and they will not *search for it as for hidden Treasures.* It is a toyl and a weariness to their pamper'd Flesh. The most are like a young Heifer unaccustomed

to

to the Yoke, they are very unquiet and disturbed when it galls and presses them, and they would throw it off, if it were not for the smart of the Goad, and the fear of Punishment. In our most early Age, we should scarcely be inclined to learn any thing, if it were not for the Checks of our Parents, and the Frowns and Severities of our Masters. And we are for the most part diligent, not because we love to take Pains, but because we cannot help it, nor do as we would our selves. Thus young Men have an aversion to Seriousness and Religion, because it is at the first very difficult, it requires a constant care of their Thoughts, a frequent examination of their Hearts, a daily self-denial and mortification of their beloved Sins; and upon this Account they leave the way of Heaven, and chuse that of Hell, because it appears to be the more smooth and easy. But they consider not that it will be Bitterness in the latter End. This is one of the great Sins of Youth, the sluggishness of their Disposition, and their unwillingness to Labour; they are soon weary of their Callings, and of honest faithful Industry; and when the Commands of their Parents or their Masters, and the dread of Inconvenience, if they should disobey, make them work, they are entertaining themselves with the Thoughts of their Diversion and their Sports. And could be well satisfied if there were more Red Letters in the Almanack, and every Day were an Holy-Day, not for the Purposes of Religion, but as a Day wherein they might cease to Labour. Thus they cherish Idleness in their Bosoms, and that multi-

plies Temptations, and those Temptations make them to be the Slaves of Satan, and opens the Door for Legions of vain unclean Thoughts to enter in. Thus young Men sink deep into the Life of Sense very early; and being engaged by Nature, and instituted by Custom (as one says) to live thus, we find it very difficult to live afterward at another rate: whereas all the things that feed and flatter our Appetites, are of very easy access, and soon practis'd; we need take no pains to see what is pleasant, nor to taste that which is sweet, nor to hear that which is delightful. This the remembrance of God will also remedy, for it will teach us to look upon him as our Master, to whom we are to be accountable for all our Sloth; this will convince us of the worth of Time, and the greatness of the Reward that we may expect upon our Diligence; this will teach us that the Gate is strait, and the Way is narrow that leads to Life; and if we would enter in, we must strive with all our Might: This will possess us with a constant fear, lest we should be found in the Condition of the unprofitable Servant that was thrown into utter Darkness.

9. And lastly; Another Sin of young Men is, *putting a far off the Evil Day.* This is the great Promoter of all their other Sins; this makes them bold in Sin, and impatient of Reproof, and careless of their Souls, because they think they shall have many Years leisure in which to repent, therefore they are Voluptuous and Riotous, and eat and drink to Excess, because they find no present alteration in their Healths; and if by Yesterday's

ſterday's Intemperance their Heads ake a little, they find that it wears off again, and that they are as ſtrong, as merry, and as brisk as before. They ſpend their Time in Vanity, becauſe they think there is yet time enough wherein to be good. They loiter at their firſt ſetting out, becauſe they hope to have a long Day; whereas all their Negligence and Security would be gone, if they remembred God, and thought Death and Judgment were at hand; their Looks, their Actions, their Diſcourſes, their Thoughts would then be changed, they would then have the ſerious Temper of the Dying, who can no more value and eſteem what is here on Earth, when they have received the terrible Summons, that warns them to appear at the Tribunal of another World. And yet theſe fooliſh Hopes poſſeſs the moſt; even thoſe that are Oldeſt would ſtill be thought Young, and many would take it for a great Affront to be called *Old*, ſo willing are they to have the Shadow on their Dial to go back, ſo deſirous to be at a large diſtance from the Grave: But young Men never fail to hug themſelves in the expectation of living long; and they repreſent Death to themſelves as in a Landskip, and a great way off, and their Confidence caſts their Nativities; and becauſe ſome live to that Period, they queſtion not but they ſhall live to the laſt Minute of Seventy or Eighty.

All theſe Evils that I have mentioned, will be overcome by a ſerious and early remembrance of God; for if we addreſs our ſelves to him, he will help us to overcome them. All the Wounds

that

that our infirm Nature labours under, will be cured by Christ, who is the great Physician of Souls; and I hope the knowledg of our Distempers, may excite us to seek for a Cure, seeing we are all over sickly and diseased. 'Tis an uncomfortable Prospect indeed, to see so many several Lusts swarming in the Minds and Conversations of the Young. But let us not be discouraged, our Holy and Powerful Redeemer, and his Blessed Spirit, can cleanse them all away. It is necessary for us that are Young, to pause a little on what a dangerous Sea we sail, and that all our Passions and Inclinations are as so many joining Storms that threaten us with Ruin and Desolation: What should we then do, but call every one upon our God betimes, lest we be swallowed up in a Gulf of Misery? Behold, we stand upon a dangerous Precipice, and in a very slippery Place. What Course shall we take, shall we travel to the place of the Forbidden Fruit, and curse our fore-Father *Adam* for bringing all this upon us? Shall we curse the Day of our Birth, and murmur at our Parents, that they have given us a sinful polluted Nature, and that they have brought us into an evil World, that has so many Snares and Temptations to corrupt us? No, let us, under the weight and burden of these Sins, go to that merciful Jesus, that has promised to ease the weary and the heavy-laden.

Inference 1. *Those that are now Old, and did remember God in their Youth, have great reason to bless God for his Mercy to them, and to rejoice that they are now come to a safer state of Life.* Though when you look upon your Bodies, you see, as it were,

were, but the Ruins of those Palaces that were once full of Comeliness and Strength; yet you ought to rejoice, that Riot and Excess, and violent and impetuous Lusts have no more their abode there: You have no cause to murmur or repine that your Youth is past away, because it was a dangerous and brittle State; its departure deserves not a Tear or a Sigh, for as it is gone with all its Pleasure, and Health, and Sweetness, so is the Danger of it also past. Look back and see with how strong and powerful Enemies, with what innumerable Temptations you were then beset, and look up to Heaven, and bless that God that came betimes to your help, and enabled you, though corrupt and weak of your selves, to get the Victory. Look back and see what dangerous Rocks, what Gulphs, what Perils, what Stratagems and Snares you have past; and remember what the God of your Youth has done for you. And let me intreat this further of you, that whilst you are arrived to the safer Shoar, that you would look with a compassionate Eye on those that are yet on a rough Sea, and in the midst of Storms, and help them with your good Advice and your Holy Prayers, by a thankful review of the Mercies of the earlier part of your Life; all the Benefit and Comfort of it will return again, though it self be gone for ever. Let your frequent Meditation, give those Mercies that you had buried in Oblivion, a new Resurrection; but however even you, if you will admit a young Man to advise your graver Years, are not to be too secure and too confident; for though you are very happy in having

travelled

travelled so far in your way towards Heaven, yet you are not at your Home. Though your evil Inclinations, like your Age, be dying, yet they are not wholly dead. No Pride, nor Haughtiness, nor Scorn, nothing but Gravity, and Mildness, and a Contentedness with your own Condition, must spring up in those Furrows which old Age has placed upon you. You have many Sins to resist that are very common to those that are as far advanced as you; many times under that Blood that seems to be frozen and glaz'd with Age; one sees the Motions of Choler, and impatience of many evil and exorbitant Desires: You must beware lest you be too Covetous, too Reserved, too Censorious in your Conversation, or your Speeches, or too Morose, or too great slighters and despisers of the Young. Your Age having had the experience of many Deceits and Cheats, of many Lies and Falsities, is apt to make you too incredulous, and too distrustful of all with whom you have to do. Gen. 47. 9. *Few and Evil have been the Days of your Pilgrimage.* Having seen many Dangers, you will be apt to despond at the Thoughts of Evil; and if you be not watchful, the coldness of your Temper will betray you to unnecessary Fear. You must beware lest the World that you once loved, and which you are disabled from pursuing as you used to do, still lodg within your Hearts; and lest you stoop down to the Earth with your Affections, as you do with your Bodies, that bend beneath the weight of many Years. You have need to be actually prepared for Death, for though we are

all

all travelling thither, yet *you have*, as we uſed to ſay, *one Foot within the Grave*. God gives you a little ſpace before you go away, and be ſeen no more, *Pſal.* 39. 1. You have need to redeem your Time, ſeeing there is but a little Sand left in your Glaſs, and by an holy *Antiperiſtaſis* is in the Winter of your Age, you ſhould be moſt full of ſacred Heat within. It is commonly pleaſant to old Men to tell long Stories of their former Adventures and Travels of their Lives; to what Straits they were reduced, and how they were delivered, and what they did ſuch and ſuch a Year, or in ſuch or ſuch Revolutions of Publick Affairs, and they are fuller of theſe, if they have lived under ſeveral Changes of the Civil Government, or in a Time of War: And it ſhould be as pleaſant to you that are old Chriſtians, to relate how you were by your Sins brought to the brink of Eternal Death; and by what Means, what Convictions, what Truths, what Motions of the Spirit you were brought to the firſt ſenſe of Danger, and under whoſe Conduct you did eſcape.

Inf. 2. *If we are thus obliged to remember our Creator; then what cauſe have we to thank him for all the Methods of his Providence that excited us to it, eſpecially for thoſe Afflictions which we met with in our Youth?* How much do we owe to the Reſtraints of his Grace, and to the ſeaſonable Rebukes of his Providence? we have no cauſe to triumph over others when they fall into Sin, but to thank God that 'tis not our own Caſe, for what Evils ſhould we not commit, ſhould he leave us to run whither we would our ſelves?

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What Follies should we be guilty of, if we made our own corrupt Appetites, and not his Word, our Guide? It is well for us when we meet with early Crosses and Disappointments; our stumbling on the Threshold, and failing in the beginning of our Projects, may make us to walk with a more watchful Step for the time to come: 'Tis better to pass through the Furnace of Affliction, than the Fire of Lust; 'tis better to feel the smart of the Rod of God, than too much to admire the smiling and the pleasant World, which we are all apt to do when uncorrected; 'tis better to meet with Vexation betimes, than always to have our own Will; 'tis better to feel the Pains of Sickness, than to taste the Joy of Sin: Lam. 3. 27. *It is good for a Man that he bear the Yoke in his Youth.* Though our way be hedged with Thorns, yet this keeps us that we do not so much go astray. Those that are diseased when they are Young, are apt to be very froward and impatient, they are apt to murmur at the prosperity and briskness of others of an equal Age: But they consider not, that there is a truer Health in the bitter Cup, and that their Troubles are to make them more serious, and to keep them from that Vanity and Lightness, those strong Snares and Temptations, into which they might else be plunged as well as others; they have less Ease and carnal Delight, but they have more Safety. Let us be well pleased if God correct our Bodies to save our Souls, if he draw us from the World to bring us to himself; *He chastens every Son whom he receiveth*, Heb. 12. 6. We cannot

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be ſooner puniſh'd than we deſerve; and we ſhould bear his Stroaks, becauſe by them he tutors us with the needful Diſcipline that he uſes to all that are in his Family. It will appear at laſt that many a young Man hath been ſaved by the means of Sickneſs and Affliction, whom a conſtant unintermitted Health might have ruined.

Inf. 3. *If it be the Duty of young Men to remember their Creator betimes*, and if they have many Hindrances to ſo good a Work; then all Parents are obliged to give their Children a religious Education, that ſo they may prevent their Sins as much as they can, and ſtifle their unruly Paſſions in the birth. You that are Parents have great Opportunities and Advantages whereby to do this more than Miniſters or Strangers: You may by their Geſtures, by their Diſcourſes, by their Sports, by their Contentions and Quarrelling, by their Joys and Fears, by their Activity or Sloth, very much ſee their Temper and Conſtitution, and to what Sins they are moſt likely to be carried away in the after-part of Life: *You muſt bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, Eph. 6. 4. You muſt give them an early Knowledg of Chriſt, and of his Offices, and his Deſign in coming into the World. You have more convenient Seaſons wherein to adviſe them, and have greater Motives whereby to allure or terrify them, than others have; and they will regard one Frown of yours, more than a thouſand Reproofs from the Mouth of Strangers. As ſoon as they are capable to underſtand, you muſt acquaint them with all neceſſary Truths, and inform them of the Creation, and of the

Fall

Fall of Man, of their original Sin, and the Danger of it, and of the way of escape by Jesus Christ. As soon as they begin to speak, learn them to discourse in the Dialect of Heaven: And from all the little Accidents and Disappointments of Life, tell them that they are entering on a World full of Vanity and Vexation; and this will blast the too-early Growth of their presumptuous and too-forward Hopes of meeting with nothing but what is easy and prosperous: You must often pray with them in secret, and teach them also to pray, and see that they do it when they rise and when they go to bed: You must bring them to the places of publick Worship, and see whether they behave themselves with Seriousness and Reverence when they are there, and be sure to ask them what they remember when they are at home; for the very Thoughts of giving an account to you, will make them much more attentive: Your Example that you set before their Eyes, must be as a constant Sermon to preach Seriousness to them; for this Age is very apt to imitate what they see their Parents do; and if you take the Liberty to do what is sinful, and before them, they will think that a sufficient Warrant to do amiss: You must not allow them to laugh at serious Things or Persons, nor incourage a profane Jest in your Child, because you would have your Neighbours think it witty; especially must you beget in them a great Reverence to the Scriptures, and by the Encouragement of Money or some small Rewards, draw them to get several Chapters by Heart; for by reason of the moisture of their Brains,

and the few Impreſſions of things that are made there, their Memories are uſually more tenacious and comprehenſive than their other Faculties; and theſe Chapters thus remembred, may in time make a deep tincture on their Minds; and perhaps it may not be unneceſſary to revive the old Cuſtom of asking your Bleſſing on their Knees; it may teach them more Dependance on God, and more Reverence to you; but by no means forget to teach them to beg a Bleſſing on their Meat or Drink at the uſual Seaſons of Refreſhment, and to return Thanks afterwards in a ſolemn and ſerious manner, and inform them that is not only a thing of Cuſtom, but of abſolute Neceſſity; for it is of God that they are to ſeek daily Bread, and he muſt give it power to nouriſh and ſtrengthen them: but above all you muſt not neglect neceſſary Chaſtiſements and moderate Severity, for they are naturally governed more by Fear than by Love, though an over-great Indulgence does not deſerve the Name; and you muſt uſe as great Corrections when they omit their Prayers, or tell a Lie, or commit any other Sin, as when they neglect their Buſineſs, or play too much; *He that ſpareth his Rod, hateth his Son*, Prov. 13. 24. Thus you muſt take them by the Hand and lead them, for they cannot of themſelves find the right way. You muſt eſpecially keep them from Idleneſs, and not nouriſh their appearing Pride; you muſt baniſh from their yet tender Bodies the too great Delicacies of the World, and accuſtom them betimes to ſuffer; you muſt not always gratify them in what they deſire, as to Meat, or Drink, or Clothes, for thus

pleased, they will quickly grow to be too nice and delicate: they are to engage in a Warfare against their own Lusts, and the Pomps and Vanities of this World: you must *train them up in the way they must go*, Prov. 22. 6. *Train them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* By your Skill must they be taught their Postures, and how to put on and use their spiritual Armor. Consider what Sins have easily prevailed against you, and wounded your Consciences, and warn them that they do not commit the like; and let the Purity of your Children be promoted by the Reflections that you make on the Errors of your own Life; and tho you loved God too late your selves and too coldly, yet endeavour that they may love him sooner, and with more Fervency: endeavour by the Loss that you have made of time your selves, to make them prize and value so great a Blessing. Take a strict notice of the Company they keep, and of the Recreations they use, and rectify and moderate their Pleasures and Expence by your own Prudence, and by frequent Counsels and Reproofs; and this way continued and repeated, may bring a Blessing on them and you, and keep them from being overcome by the Lusts of Youth. And because there is nothing more necessary than such an Education, and yet nothing more rare, give me leave to press it a little more upon you by these Considerations.

1. *You gave them a vicious and corrupt Nature*, and from you they come into the World very much defiled with hereditary Guilt; you gave them their original Disease, and therefore you should be more industrious, that by your means

means they may receive a Cure from you; they are born Sinners, and you ſhould not refuſe any Pains that they may be new-born, and that Chriſt may be formed in their Hearts; *They are eſtranged from the Womb*, Pſal. 58. 3. You may ſee the Power of corrupt Nature in them, in their Paſſions, their Impatiences, their little Angers, even before they come to the Uſe of Reaſon; they are Sinners by Inclination, and Sinners by Act, when they have the Power to do amiſs. By your Rebellion againſt God, their Blood is tainted, and you muſt endeavour by reſtoring them to his Friendſhip and his Pardon, to take that ſad Attainder off; you bring them into an evil World which they viſit firſt with Tears, as a too true Preſage of their future Sorrows: If you ſuffer them to go in a wrong way at firſt, into what Miſtakes will they run before they die?

2. *God in giving you Children, depoſites a great Truſt in your Hands*, and you muſt give a ſtrict account hereafter how you manage that Truſt. Miniſters are not the only Perſons that have the Cure of Souls, you have ſo too; *Ezek.* 3. 18. and if you warn them not of their Danger, they ſhall periſh in their Sins, but at your Hand will God require their Blood. Wo will be to thoſe that are Miniſters if they neglect their Charge, and wo will be to you if you be found guilty of the ſame. The Souls of your Children belong to God, they are his, he commits the management and keeping of this great Treaſure unto you: O how careful ſhould you be to uſe and to improve it well. Jeſus Chriſt commits to you the Souls that he redeemed with the Price of

his own Blood: How careful ſhould you be to keep thoſe from periſhing, who were ſo dearly bought? He will try (as one ſays) by the Zeal you ſhew for their Education, whether you ſeek his Glory, and whether you are faithful to his Intereſts. Certainly you ought to tremble at the Thoughts of the Greatneſs of the Charge, and of an Imployment that is ſo difficult: though you behave your ſelves with an unſpotted Unblamableneſs and Integrity in the other parts of your Life, and in your other Duties, yet you will draw upon your ſelves the Indignation of God, for not having laboured with all your Force and Might in the good Education of your Children; for thus old *Eli* did, 1 *Sam.* 3. 11, 12, 13. You are admitted to a great Honour when you are called to ſuch a Work; What an Honour is it to be admitted to the ſame Miniſtry with the Angels, to be choſen to be the viſible Guardians and Governours of Souls, which Jeſus Chriſt has redeemed with his own Blood?

3. *You muſt be extreamly cruel, if you do not what you can to enable your Children to remember their Creator.* You no ſooner ſee their Clothes diſordered or torn, but you endeavour to repair and mend them; you no ſooner ſee their Hunger, but you give them Meat; you no ſooner ſee them ill, but you ſeek to know their Diſtemper, and to get a Cure: but the Neceſſities and the Dangers of their Souls call upon you for your Help, and you give them none. They ſeem indeed to be well pleaſed when they are let alone, and when they are uninſtructed, for alas the poor thoughtleſs Creatures know not the Danger they are in: Will

you

you do nothing for their Salvation, nothing for their everlaſting Welfare? Shall they die of their Diſeaſe? Shall the ſecond Death ſnatch them away for ever, and will you ſtand by and ſee them die? Do you ſee them near eternal Flames, and will you let them go on till they are actually there, and do nothing for them, when you might do ſo much to pluck them out of the Fire? O where is your Compaſſion, where is your Pity? Your Bowels would yern within you to ſee them maſſacred or torn to peices, and their Blood daſh'd againſt the Stones: And ſhall your Hearts be as unſenſible as Rocks, when the Devil is coming to tear them from your Embraces, and to make them his Captives, and ſhall they with your Conſent become his eaſy Prey? If you do not inſtruct and teach, and warn your Children, you do as it were murther them with your own Hands: You do as ill as if you took them up in your own Arms, and then threw them into the Lions Den; and you do as ill as if you ſhould look on whilſt they were torn to peices; and that which increaſes the Guilt, is, that they are *your own, your own Children*, your own helpleſs ſinful Offspring, that you uſe in ſuch a barbarous and cruel manner, and are thoſe Children that in their Infancy pleaſe you with their little innocent Actions, and their pretty Smiles; that in their Childhood are the Solace of your freer Hours; that in their Youth comfort you by the Hopefulneſs of their Diſpoſition, and the Sweetneſs of their Looks. Are not theſe Children too good to be made a Sacrifice to the Devil, and too nearly related to you to be offered up to him by

you? Are they not your own Fleſh? and when you conſider this, have you no Tongues to ſpeak for their Salvation? Have you no Eyes to weep over their Impenitence? What will all your other Cares for them avail, if you omit this? What does it avail to have taught them how to behave themſelves in Company, to ſecure your own Reputation, and to have them thought well bred, if you have not taught them their Duty to their God? What avails it if you heap up for them great Quantities of Gold or Silver, if you leave them his Curſe, and ſuffer them to remain under the Power of thoſe evil Inclinations that make them to waſte in criminal Expences, and in Prodigality, that which you hoarded up? Theſe are Stones that you ought to form for the building of the Church: theſe are Veſſels that you ought to keep very neat and clean, and to poliſh every day. Why do you ſuffer ſo many Sins to lodg undiſturbed in thoſe Breaſts, which ſhould be the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt? have you not Sins enough of your own, but you will make your ſelves anſwerable for theirs too? Would you have the Guilt of all the Oaths they ſhall ſwear, of all their Riots and Exceſſes, of all the Sabbaths they ſhall prophane, and of all their other evil Practices, to be laid at your door; and muſt it be ſaid at laſt, that you were the Cauſe of all this? Would you be anſwerable for all the Sins that they are tempting others to commit by their ill Example, becauſe you did not as much as you could to hinder all this? If they ſhould become good after all your Negligence, if they ſhould get out of all this Bondage and Slavery to Sin

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and youthful Lusts, it will be the effect of God's Mercy, but their Parents will not escape, because by indulging them in their Vanities, they prepared the Poison, and laid the Train, and did what they could to ruin them: But neither must you that are young, think that God will excuse you from Punishment, for you are still under an Obligation to *remember your Creator*; and neither this, nor any other Plea, will serve if you do it not. If you do instruct your Children, and bring them up in the Fear of the Lord, what a Comfort will it be to think that those that were born of you, shall be some of those that join their Voices with the Quire of Angels and glorified Souls, and that they shall be Children of the King of Heaven? And that they who are born of you, shall wear a Crown of Glory, and be Heirs of an immoveable Kingdom that fades not away?

IV. The fourth General is, to shew what Rules are to be observ'd, that we may *remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth*; and they are these following.

First, *Endeavour to know God in Christ*, to understand his Covenant of Grace, and on what Terms it is that you may hope for acceptance with him. You will have no inclination to remember God, unless the Thoughts of him be agreeable and pleasant to you; and they cannot be so, unless you think of him as willing to be reconciled, and to forgive you for the sake of the Sufferings and Intercession of his Son the great Mediator: Get your Souls deeply possessed with a sense of the wonderful Love of God in sending

ſo great a Perſon to accompliſh your Redemption and Salvation, and be continually admiring the Riches of his Grace to loſt Sinners.

Secondly, *Frequently read the Holy Scriptures*, that will greatly promote this Remembrance of God. In theſe Scriptures you have many admirable Directions for the performance of your Duty, abundance of gracious Promiſes to encourage and ſupport your Hearts, and many Threats to excite you to holy Fear and Care, and many Examples of thoſe that have remembred God: In theſe are the moſt powerful Motives to kindle and inflame your Zeal. To the Scripture you muſt continually apply your Thoughts, as the Rule and the Guide of your Faith and Life: it is not enough that it be imprinted on your Memories: it is not enough that you admire the Purity, Excellence and Holineſs of his Word, but you muſt endeavour to walk in the Way that it preſcribes, which is to fear God, and keep his Commandments.

Thirdly, *Obey the Motions of the Holy Spirit*; ſtifle not the Convictions that he raiſes in your Hearts. You need greatly his Illumination, his Influence, and his conſtant Help; he muſt renew and teach you to be religious; he muſt ſubdue and mortify your ſtrongeſt Luſts; he muſt inſpire you with ſerious Thoughts, and give you power and ability to do what is good, *Rom.* 8. 13. He alone can make to abound in your Hearts all thoſe Graces that are contrary to your vicious and corrupt Inclinations; ſo that though they be not quite aboliſhed, yet they ſhall not remain in a too powerful degree: This Spirit weakens your old evil Habits by a ſweet and effectual Operation on your

your Souls: hear his Voice, follow his Call, and always entertain this great Meſſenger, who is ſent on ſo kind an Errand as that of your Salvation: Cheriſh and receive all his bleſſed and profitable Motions with great delight: *Walk in the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 16. perform all your Duties with the vigour and fervour of your Minds; for Walking implies Heat and Life, Motion and Progreſs, Growth and Strength; and then remember he works upon your Underſtandings, Wills and Affections, ſuitable to their ſeveral Natures; his acting is not with a deſign to hinder, but to facilitate and promote your own Endeavours.

Fourthly, *We muſt endeavour to purge our Souls from an over-great Affection to the Body, and to things that only gratify the Senſes.* If we pore much on theſe earthly things, ſuch Vapours will ariſe thence as will eclipſe our Sight of God, and make *the Candle of the Lord* within us to burn with a faint and weak Light. As in the Grave there is no *Knowledg, no Wiſdom*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. neither do *they celebrate and praiſe God*, Iſa. 38. 18. 'tis a Land of Forgetfulneſs, where the Inhabitants have no Senſe, no Remembrance: ſo is the Caſe of thoſe young Men that are too much intent on worldly Pleaſures, they are buried alive, the Body (as the *Platoniſt* ſpeaks) is made the portable Sepulchre of the Soul; and 'tis no wonder if ſuch, like Perſons in their Graves, have no Remembrance, no lively Thoughts of God; their beſt and upper Chambers are taken up with ſo many various Pleaſures, that they have no room left for this more honourable Gueſt. If we would *remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth*, we

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must be temperate, and chaste, and sober, and restrain our Passions; and when our ancient Pleasures come in a flattering dress to court our Hearts again, we must scorn their Motions, and tell them that we *now* resolve to *contemplate* God alone, that will afford us more noble, valuable Joys; for as to all worldly Things, they are both seen and gone in a very little time, they are in continual motion, and like a Vessel at Sea, which the People on the Shoar see a little while dancing on the Waves, and immediately after 'tis with a swift course carried out of their sight. It will be necessary to this Remembrance of our Creator, that we duly govern our Appetites, and improve our Time in the pursuit of more generous and sublime Pleasures, than of those that have a relation only to the Body: Far from this *heavenly Temper* are they that eat and drink to excess; and then, instead of remembring their Creator, curse him in their Hearts, as *Job* feared his Children would do, *when they feasted in their Houses every one his Day*, Job 1. 5. and not only so, but having over-charged themselves, they vomit up their Reproaches against the holy Religion of our Saviour, and his blessed Precepts. It greatly concerns you to keep a strict government over your Appetites; in Meats and Drinks you must use Temperance and Sobriety, and be afraid of transgressing the due bounds, either in the Quantity or the Quality of what you eat and drink. Nothing contributes more to the forgetfulness of God, and the empire and reign of Lust, than the too much gratifying and pampering of the Body, and its slavish Appetites; you must there-

therefore keep it in ſubjection to the Law of God, and the Dictates of Reaſon. Beware of a wandring Eye, a liquoriſh Palate, of fooliſh Paſſions, and impetuous and violent Deſires. Avoid and abhor all vain Thoughts, and do nothing but what becomes Chriſtians and rational Creatures: always conſult what is juſt and fit, what will miniſter to your Health and natural Refreſhment, the better ſerving of God, and the better performance of holy Duties; whatſoever hinders theſe is criminal and ſinful. Uſe your ſelves every day to deny your moſt ſtrong and violent Inclinations; and always ſuſpect thoſe things that are moſt pleaſant and delightful only to Senſe. Accuſtom your Bodies to bear Diſappointments; for if all their Appetites be gratified, they will froth into Luſt, boil into Anger, or ſwell with Pride; your Brains will be clouded, and your Hearts defiled. Tie your Body to ſome certain Rule, that ſo the Beaſt may not run away with the Man; you muſt treat and uſe it as a Servant to the Soul, but when it proves a clog and a burden to it, then you are to ſuſpect an Enemy; for either your corrupt Nature, your Senſes, or the Devil hath betrayed you. This keeping the Body under, is not to tyrannize over it, nor to deſtroy it by ſuperſtitious Mortifications, but to make it a Companion in the Way to Heaven, and to make it to advance with ſlower paces to the Grave; for what promotes our Religion, does advance our Health at the ſame time. It is not to be wondred at, that they are alſo forgetful of their God, who it may be ſpend more time in reading of Plays and Romantick

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Hiſtories, and the Adventures of feigned Heroes, than in reading of the Bible, that would teach them to remember God, and inſpire them with none but lawful Paſſions, ſuch as have reigned in the Breaſts of thoſe Worthies, who have endured all imaginable Dangers, with a Valour more than humane, for the Love they bore to their Creator, and who well deſerve our Imitation. Nor be they leſs unmindful of God, who are much addicted to ſinful Games and Sports, where the Devil often is the greateſt Gainer, and at which they for a Triſle throw their Souls away; and ſuch alſo deſerve no better Character, that ſpend more time at their Glaſs, than on their Knees in Prayer; that are more concerned if a Wig, or a Crevat, or a Commode ſit wrong, than for all the interiour Blemiſhes and Diſorders of the Mind; that are more obſervant of the Rules of Civility, than of the Laws of God, though both theſe might conſiſt well enough together. Such alſo cannot be ſuppoſed to be mindful of their Creator, that uſe a greater care to be affable and courteous in their Behaviour, than to be holy in their Lives; though, when duly limited, an agreeable, chearful Converſation, and an upright Heart before God, are things greatly neceſſary for the Comfort of Life, and the Honour of Religion. I delight not to inſiſt upon the Miſcarriages of Youth, God knows they are too many; nor will I enlarge upon the Crime of ſuch, that in their Health conſult their Tailor more than their Divine; and while they ſtrive to cloath their leſs valuable Part in a genteel ſplendid Habit, have their poor unregarded Souls full of Ulcers

cers and Putrefaction, and void of Grace. This too great Affection to the Body, and the ſenſual Life darkens the Glory of the Mind; and the intemperate luxurious Perſon, to uſe the Compariſon of *Maximus Tyrius* (*Diſſert.* 28.) upon this Subject, 'Is troubled with a Vertigo in his Head, 'and like one that has drunk too much Wine, 'he is not far from Madneſs, but that now and 'then he recollects himſelf, and uſes a little Rea-'ſon, but by and by that Light is quench'd, and 'he reels to and fro again, as one left in the 'dark, and in a ſtrange Place. Thus he is loſt as to all wiſe and ſober Conſiderations; and 'tis no wonder if he who has forgot himſelf, forget his God; or that he, who is not Maſter of his own Thoughts, have not the ſenſe of his Creator there. When the Manhood is drowned, 'tis no wonder that we ſee not the Religion floating on the Water. With theſe ſenſual Delights are young Men too often charmed aſleep; and then, like Perſons in a Dream, they cannot govern their own Spirits, which will often be poſſeſs'd with the meaneſt inconſiderable things. The Philoſophers (as one obſerves) 'To ſeparate the 'Mind from things ſenſual, deviſed Mathemati-'cal Contemplations, whereby the Souls of Men 'might ſhake off their Dependency on Senſe, 'and learn to go alone, without the Crutch of 'any ſenſible or material thing to ſupport them, 'and ſo be a little inured, being once got above 'the Body, to converſe freely with Immaterial 'Natures. So ſhould we learn to ſeparate our Affections from what is preſent, and to let them frequently take their Flight to the Heaven above,

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the Throne of God; the ſight of which we loſe, when we bring upon our ſelves the Puniſhment of the Serpent, when we creep on this Earth, and lie groveling in the Duſt. What will all the Cares that Young Men take about this mortal ruinous Habitation avail, when they muſt e're long exchange their fine Clothes for a Winding-ſheet; and when they are nailed up in their Coffins, what better will they be for all their gorgeous Apparel, and their dainty Food? Or, will it be a good Plea in Judgment, if the Young Man ſhould ſay thus; 'Lord, I ſpent ſo 'much time abroad, ſo much in the Tavern, ſo 'much on my Recreations, and my worldly Bu'ſineſs, that I had none left to remember thee, 'or to think of the true State of my own Soul? Or rather, will not the Soul of ſuch an one hereafter be amaz'd, when being clothed with *the Garments of Heavineſs*, he ſhall be forc'd to cry out after this or the like manner? 'O that 'the many Days I ſpent in Vanity, I had laid out 'to prepare my Soul for the Hour of my Change, 'and the Day of Judgment, then I had been in a 'ſafe and quiet Harbour; whereas now I am 'begirt with Lightning and Thunder, Storms 'and Tempeſts, and muſt never ſee the Sun ſhine 'again! O that the Diſcourſe I made ſo often 'about my worldly Pleaſures, about new Modes 'and Fathions, I had made of God and Heaven, 'I ſhould not then have ſeen thoſe horrid Ob'jects of Terror, nor have had my Ears pierc'd 'with theſe hideous Shrieks of my Fellow-Pri'ſoners! I would not in the Days of my Life 'on Earth remember God, but now I muſt re-

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'member him whether I will or not, and no 'more as a Friend, but as an Enemy; no more 'as a Father, but as an angry Judg!

Fifthly; *If we would remember our Creator in the Days of our Youth, we muſt avoid the Company of ſuch, who, as we may judg by their Practice, have him not in all their Thoughts.* Beware of ill Company, for nothing is more contagious than a bad Example, it uſually has a greater Force than either the Power of Reaſon, or the Authority of God or Man; always eſteem it to be more creditable and more advantagious to aſſociate our ſelves with thoſe young Men that are Modeſt, and Humble, and Serious, and Devout, rather than with the Light, the Jovial, and the Briſk. The Manners of Men are generally formed by thoſe with whom they have the more frequent Commerce and Familiarity: thoſe that you make your Friends, or call by that Name, by their nearneſs and their knowledg of your Temper, your Inclinations, your Affections, and your Intereſt, have a great opportunity to do you either much Good or Hurt; and if you have a daily Converſation with the Vicious and Prophane, their way of ſpeaking will very much hinder your Diſcourſe; and thoſe Irregularities that appear in their Actions, will, by inſenſible Degrees, inſinuate themſelves into yours: if you are frequently with thoſe that are Idle, or Intemperate, or Swearers, or Unclean, or breakers of the Sabbaths, you will in a little time learn the ſame Exceſs, the ſame Oaths, the ſame Boldneſs in Sin, and the ſame Violations of the Holy Day. You cannot long

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retain your Health, if you breath in a corrupt Air. You ought, when the Neceſſities of your Trade or Buſineſs call you into that Company that is Irreligious, to antidote and fortify your ſelves by the Senſe of Religion, and an Awe of God, and to be always on your Guard, leſt you be drawn into a ſinful compliance with their Wickedneſs; and it will be much better, when occaſions of Evil preſent themſelves, to be thought moroſe, than genteely to pleaſe them, and by ſo doing to hurt your own Souls. Look upon thoſe young Men with an honourable eſteem, that are not polluted with the uſual Vices of their Age, and the Places where they live; delight to be frequently with ſuch, and you will reap innumerable Advantages by their Society; your Sin will be ſham'd by the ſight of their Holineſs, and your Graces quickned by their Zeal and Fervour: They will teach you when you are ignorant, reprove you when you do amiſs; they will rejoice in all your Proſperities, and ſympathize with all your Griefs: When you fall, their Pity and their Love will help you to riſe again; and when you wander, they will, out of a loving concern for your Salvation, be your faithful Guides in the way of Heaven: By ſeeing their Goodneſs, you will begin alſo to be good; and the impreſſions of their holy Example, will for a long time remain; you cannot but receive ſome benefit by their Converſation, as 'tis impoſſible to handle Perfumes without bearing away part of their Scent. By the Bleſſing of God upon your removal out of bad Company, into that which is good, you will greatly flouriſh;

riſh; as many that are in Conſumptions, when they are in places full of hurtful Vapors, ſenſibly revive when they breath in a purer Air, *Prov.* 13. 20. How many unhappy young Men have dated their Ruin from their ill Companions, and have curſt them with bitter Execrations afterwards? Have nothing therefore to do with thoſe that are Enemies to Religion, and that think themſelves moſt ingenious, when they ſcorn an Holy Life: Take not your Meaſures of Things from their Opinion and Judgment; tread not in their Steps, but follow that Courſe in which Chriſt and his Apoſtles, the Holy Martyrs, and all the Bleſſed Saints, that were the wiſeſt and beſt of Men, have gone before: Make none your Companions now, but ſuch with whom you could be content to be found at the great Day. Had you not rather then be found among the Humble, the Meek, and thoſe that denied themſelves, than among thoſe that wallowed in all ſorts of Luſts, and were extreamly flagitious? Will theſe be better Friends at laſt than God or Chriſt? You are not willing to venture your Bodies among thoſe that are infected with ſome dangerous Diſtemper, or in a contagious Air, and will you hazard the Welfare of your better part among thoſe, who are leprous all over, and whoſe *Throat is an open Sepulchre*, Rom. 3. 13. who if you be a Picture will deface it, if you be a Glaſs they will ſpoil it with their tainted Breath? Do you expect to have a ſerious Remembrance of your Creator, if you converſe with ſuch as ſit *in the Chair of Scorners*, Pſal. 1. 1. and deride Religion, though their Scoffs againſt

it are to be accounted as ridiculous as it would be in a blind Man, that knows not the Comfort and Benefit of Light, to rail againſt the Sun? Would it not be diſingenuous and baſe for a Man to quarrel at the Light by which he ſees, or at the Air in which he breaths, and ſhall we not account them unworthy of our Friendſhip, that ſpeak againſt God, that God that made them, and in whom *they live, and move, and have their Being?* Acts 17. 28. 'Tis in ſuch Company that Satan waits for our halting, and we ſhould be as careful to avoid it, as we would a place where we certainly knew there was a Mine ſprung, and a Match lighted to fire the Train, and blow us up. 'Tis there the Devil lies in wait for Youth; and becauſe he knows, that Age is much affected with Credit and Reputation, he endeavours to cloath thoſe Sins in a genteel, faſhionable Dreſs, which would be frightful, did they appear in their own ugly Shape; and when this infernal Serpent has by his inſinuating Methods proſelyted one Young Man, he inſtructs him in his helliſh Arts, and ſends him abroad as his Emiſſary to gain many more: to ſeek Advantage from ſuch Society, is as if we thought we could no where find a Cure but in a *Lazaretto*, no where Health, but in the Chambers of the Sick. How many poor young Men have in ſuch Company loſt their Innocence, and have had their Souls diſeaſed and benum'd, not ſenſible of their ill State *till a Dart ſtruck through their Liver*, (Prov. 7. 23.) which none could pull out again? How many have by this means been nipt in the Bud, and ſpoiled, that gave fair hopes to their poor Parents of their after-

after-fruitfulneſs by their early Bloſſoms? They that were once ſerious, and well-diſpoſed, by aſſociating with careleſs, profane Livers, have loſt their former Tenderneſs, their fear of Sin, their ſenſe of God. How many ingenuous Tempers have been depraved by this one great Stratagem, ſo that they have employed the Talents that were given them by God, to arm his Enemies, to raiſe War againſt him in his own Dominions, and with the Tools he put into their Hands they built the Kingdom of the Devil? And as it would be but a poor Commendation of a Man to ſay, He very ingenuouſly made himſelf away, or, He neatly cut his own Throat; ſo theſe deſerve no good Character, who are only witty to promote their own Miſery, thinking to be wiſer than God; they make their own Hell while they are alive, and, poor Creatures, are haſtning to lie down in a Bed of eternal Sorrows, and (which aggravates the Terror of it) with Laughter, and a Joke. How many, by the ill Example of their Companions, have caſt off the Reſpect they once paid to their great Maſter, and have learn'd *to eat and drink with the Drunken*, (Mat. 24. 49.) and to ſmite him and his Servants too, with their violent and bitter Tongues? They have been perſwaded to look upon their once dear and ſweet Religion, as a tedious melancholy Thing; and have parted with the Favour of God, the Hopes of Glory, and the real Pleaſures of another World for the poor Joys of this; they have become as much the ſworn Oppoſers of all that is good, as if they had been baptiz'd in the Name of the De-

vil, and not in the Name of Jeſus. How many ſober Parents have, to the Grief of their Hearts, ſeen by this means, the Children of their Hopes, the Children of their Prayers, tainted with Vice and Wickedneſs? They have ſeen the Children they once inſtructed, led away with Error; and thoſe, to whom they taught the Language of Heaven, ſpeaking the Dialect of Hell, and running with ſuch Violence in the broad Way, as if they were afraid they ſhould not come to their everlaſting Sufferings ſoon enough. Thus they forget their Creator, and make a Rod for their own Backs; which will hereafter, like the *Rod of Moſes*, (Exod. 4. 3.) be turn'd into a *Serpent*, and devour all their Hopes; and, what Comfort will they, that now ſcoff at all that is Grave and Serious, have hereafter, when thoſe Tongues that *are ſet on Fire of Hell*, (Jam. 3. 6.) ſhall be curſing in thoſe Flames, and not be able to jeſt any more? With what pale Faces, and dejected Eyes, will they that are now jovial and brisk together, look upon the diſmal Concluſion of their ill Choice, when the Scene will be changed, and inſtead of Mirth, there *will be Lamentation, Weeping, and gnaſhing of Teeth*? Mat. 8. 12. Their Eyes that now run after Vanity, will then be fixed in the ſolitary Contemplation of their great Loſs. And their Thoughts, that are now roving and diſorder'd, will then be their own Torture: With what hideous Cries will they then lament their early Follies, and upbraid one another? "Had it not been for thee, "cruel Creature, (will one ſay to his miſerable "Companion) I had not fallen into this help-

"leſs

" leſs irrecoverable State: Had it not been for " thee, I that am now pale with Hunger, and " faint with Thirſt, might have drank of that " River, the Streams whereof *make glad the* " *City of God*, Pſal. 46. 4. and have been feaſt- " ing with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and all " Holy Souls, at the *Supper of the Lamb.* Had " it not been for thee, inſtead of being con- " fin'd to theſe Chains, and this doleful Priſon, " I might have been walking in *the Streets of the* " *New Jeruſalem:* But now the Gulf is fix'd, " my Hopes are gone, and my Sun is ſet. And all that ſuch a diſtreſſed Creature ſhall receive from ſuch a miſerable Complaint, will only be, to hear the like ſad Language from his Neighbour, and ſo that deep and ugly Cave will ring with the noiſe of their Stripes, and the lamentable Cries wherewith they will for ever ſalute one another, ſaying, *Wo unto us, for we have ſinned!* Lam. 5. 16. Wo unto us, for we have ſinn'd our ſelves into this burning Lake!

Sixthly; *That you may flee theſe Luſts of Youth, attend the Buſineſs of your Callings with diligence and activity.* An harmleſs Induſtry was one of the Pleaſures of Paradiſe; and nothing will ever thrive or proſper that you do without a ſuitable application, but be as the Field of a Sluggard, *Prov.* 24. 3. Idleneſs and Sloth is the great bane of Youth; and when you once lay your Heads on this Pillow, you will be filled with a thouſand Extravagancies, and your Thoughts will be like the Dreams of the Sick, full of odd and ridiculous Fancies, and ſuch are confuſed. Idleneſs is that Correſpondent that Satan main-

tains in our Hearts, that acquaints him with all our unwatchful Seaſons, and that invites him to aſſault us: This puts a new Edg upon his Sword, and makes the Wounds that he gives us, deeper and more malignant than otherwiſe they would have been; this poiſons his Darts, and adds an incurable Venom to the firſt Hurt and Sore. By ſtanding ſtill, our Souls ſtagnate and putrify; and if we have any Grace, it corrupts and degenerates, and keeps not its due and proper Circulation. Idleneſs does uſually fill our Minds with vain Thoughts; and there is nothing that promotes a forgetfulneſs of God more than this: But if you are laborious in your lawful Callings, you will not have leiſure to be wicked, or at leaſt not to ſo great a degree as you would arrive to by being ſlothful and remiſs: Whilſt you are Idle, you defraud God of your Service, your Neighbours of a good Example, and your ſelves of that precious Time, which being once paſt, is irrecoverable. Mind thoſe Employments in which you are fix'd by the Care of your Parents, and the Providence of God, and fill not up the void Spaces and Intervals of your Buſineſs with criminal Games or Recreations, with unprofitable Viſits, or vain Diſcourſe; but uſe your ſelves to Pray, to read the Scriptures, to ſearch your own Hearts; leave others, by a prodigal Expence of too many Hours, to contrive their Dreſs, to put themſelves to the care of too many ſollicitous Thoughts, how they may appear Gay and Fine. Remember that you have a greater and a higher Work to do; and if it ſo happen that the Plenty

ty of your Condition, and the Riches that you have from the kindneſs of your Predeceſſors, allow you more Leiſure than others have, yet you are not diſcharged from a faithful and diligent improvement of your Time, no more than the poorer ſort of Men. Let ſerious Books have more of your Love, than thoſe that by the Fancy of a Poet, or a wild Imagination of a ſenſual Hiſtorian, are filled with ſtrange Paſſions, or incredible Adventures, to amuſe and tempt, or divert your Thoughts from what is ſerious; for thus you may be laboriouſly idle, and ſtudy hard to no purpoſe. Take more pleaſure in reſorting to the Church, than to the Theatre, where the World is dreſt up to the beſt advantage, and where a ſecret Poiſon is infuſed into the Minds of the Young, under the ſhew of Pleaſure. All the activity and ſprightlineſs of your Age is due to God, and by a right direction of your Labour, you may do more for him now in a Day, than hereafter in a Month. Thoſe that are Old, and moſt ſerious, and have begun their Diligence betimes, are concerned at laſt to ſee that they have run with ſo ſlow a pace, and wonder that they have done no more for God. *Hoſea* 10. 12. That Corn that lies long in the Granary, brings forth no Harveſt; it is commonly the Food of Vermine, and ſome Creatures of the Night and Darkneſs.

Seventhly; *Be not diſcouraged at the Difficulties that you meet withal in your firſt Endeavours to be Religious.* All Arts and Sciences have ſome difficulties at the firſt; the Books that we firſt learn, the Buſineſs or Trade into which you are

firſt initiated, ſeem difficult; but the continuance, and length of Time, make thoſe Difficulties to vaniſh which appeared to be inſuperable at the firſt view; and we find that to be eaſily diſpatched by a renewed Induſtry, which in the deſpair of accompliſhing our Project, we were unwilling to ſet upon. All that is Excellent, hath ſomething of Difficulty: The Mines of Gold and Silver diſcover not themſelves to careleſs Paſſengers, but to thoſe that ſearch into the Bowels of the Earth; and the value of the Thing when it is once obtained, recompenſes the Labourer for the greatneſs of his Toil. 'Tis hard for us indeed to ſubdue our Luſts, but that which ſhould relieve us in the Sharpneſs of the Combat, is the Glory of the Victory, of which we have good Aſſurance, for the God that is Omnipotent is on our ſide, *and if he be for us, who can be againſt us?* And when our Courage, becauſe of the Multitude and continued Aſſaults of our Luſts, begins to ſhrink, he will be a preſent help in time of need. What Pains can be too much to pleaſe ſuch a Friend as he, *whoſe Yoke is eaſy, and whoſe Burden is light*; who gives us abundant Mercies and Conſolations in the midſt of all our Work? We may well indure ſome Pangs when Chriſt is firſt formed in us, and when we are new-born, becauſe ſo great a Joy will ſucceed the bleſſed Birth. Though it ſeem difficult to quit thoſe Luſts which we have gratified before, yet by frequent Denials they will ceaſe to be importunate and craving. It is a matter of Labour to reſiſt the Devil, but when he is once foiled, 'tis more eaſy to purſue the Chaſe. What Pains do

Men

Men uſually take for other things, the Benefit of which will not be ſo great as will come to us by remembring our Creator? Over what dangerous Seas do they ſail to purſue their Merchandize and Gain? How do they toil and ſweat for Wealth, which if they obtain, it quickly flies away again? Many think whole Nights and Days little enough to offer up to their Games and Revellings, and are not troubled; and ſhall we be ſo when our Salvation is at ſtake? Men can go to Bed late, riſe early, and be buſy all the Day for Profit and Advantage; and ſhall the conſtant Remembrance of God appear to be ſo frightful and terrible to us? You can eaſily abſtain from your Meat and Drink, when you are about ſome earneſt Buſineſs, or engaged in ſome Recreations that are extreamly delightful, and not feel any great Inconvenience: and ſhall we complain of the Hardſhip of our Work, when we are incouraged by ſo many gracious Promiſes of Happineſs, and which are comfirmed by that God that cannot lie, nor will deceive our Hope? We can eaſily forbear many things that we like for the Ends of Health: And is not the Welfare of our Souls more to be deſired, than a ſound and vigorous Conſtitution of our Bodies? When we have accuſtomed our ſelves to Religion, our new Nature will act with as much Eaſe as our old; our increaſing Years will increaſe our Experience and Skill; and the Beams of our Knowledg, like the dawn of the Morning, will ſhine more and more to a perfect Day; our further Progreſs will make our Work more eaſy. Many things are hard to a Child which are eaſy to a Man: Many things ſeem perplex'd

plex'd and intricate to a young Student, which are easily resolved by an experienced Philosopher or Divine. Many Cases puzzle a young Practitioner in Physick, for which an old Doctor finds a proper and easy Cure. Our unmortified Lusts are the chief Causes of our Fear, and when they are banished, we shall taste more Sweetness in Religion; for they vitiate our Palats, and make us to disrelish those things which are in themselves highly grateful. The Blood that runs in the Veins of the Young, pushes them forward to meet all Occurrences with Resolution and Earnestness; and why should we tremble or be afraid to wrestle against our Lusts, when God is the Spectator, and Heaven the Reward, and our Salvation is the Prize for which we contend and strive? And can any Labour seem too tedious, when we expect the Comforts of a long Eternity?

Eighthly; *Often ask Advice of those that are old both in Years and Grace.* Those that are to pass to some foreign Place, or a Country at a great Distance, and by a way which they have never yet gone, and that is of it self hard to find, will ask advice of those that have travelled over that Road before. Old Christians seeing they have past the Shelves on which our careless Age is like to split, can discover to us where the Danger lies; they will tell you how they once indeed tasted of the same Delights that you are thirsting after, but that they left behind them Bitterness and Stings; they will tell you that the Folly of their misguided Hopes made them seek the Friendship and Allurements of the World with as eager and as importunate Desires as you do; but

but that they find all that they once admired, to be Vanity, upon their ſecond and more conſiderate Reviews: They had once the ſame vicious Propenſities with you, and met with the ſame Temptations, and the like violent Aſſaults of the Devil, but they fought their way through many Hazards, and ſo, like old Souldiers, can forewarn you of the Danger, and teach you how to fight and to get the Victory: We are to reverence thoſe that are our Superiours in Age, as well as thoſe that are ſo in outward Accommodations, and by their moving in an higher Sphere; and we muſt bring Minds very tractable and willing to attend to what their graver Years, and Experience and Love to us ſhall ſuggeſt and adviſe for our Good, eſpecially to be very tractable and ſubmiſſive to the ſerious Admonitions of thoſe that have been in Chriſt before us, and have felt the Benefits of his Death and Interceſſion: Our Eyes muſt be open to look upon the Steps in which their Feet have trod, and our Ears open to their uſeful Directions and Reproofs: We ſhould ſhew all manner of Readineſs to learn of them, for their longer and more mature Apprehenſions have made them to be great Maſters both in the ſpeculative and practical parts of that Religion which we are to be acquainted with; they have a clearer Light than we, whereby to diſcern what is good or evil: All the Heat and Ardor that they had in their Youth, being in a manner totally extinguiſhed, they are come to cooler and wiſer Thoughts; theſe are the Mirrors on which we are to look, and by which we may dreſs our ſelves, which by their Brightneſs

will

will discover our Defects and our Spots, our Disease and our Cure: Humility and Modesty, and a teachable Disposition, are the most graceful Qualifications of the Young; whereas nothing is more uncomely than to be obstinate in our unripe Thoughts, and to help out the Weakness of our Knowledg with the Strength of Self-Conceit; when we are mistaken we must freely confess our Errors, and think it more honourable to retract what we have done ill, than to persevere in it, for it would be a Pride and Arrogance insupportable, to think our selves at the first Lanching out, as wise and as able to steer our Course well, as those who have past by several Voyages through those Storms that toss our Vessel, and put our Souls in danger. They have gone by a regular and direct Passage through the several Stages of our brittle Life, and can assist us to walk with a surer Foot, by the remembrance that they have of those Impediments which made them to fall and stumble: And to be sure when these old Christians advise us for our Good, 'tis out of a real Pity and Compassion to see us in so unsafe a State, and of our selves so like to perish.

Ninthly; *If it please God, by the use of these good Endeavours, to make the remembrance of Himself pleasant to you, take heed that you do not backslide, and forget Him, as you formerly used to do.* Having set out well in the Morning, beware lest you lose your way before the Night comes. Having once tasted how gracious the Lord is, it will be shameful to return to the mean and unsatisfying Relish of sensual Delights.

When

When you have taken Wing, and by a generous flight ſoared towards Heaven, you muſt not ſuffer your ſelves to flag or to fall to this Earth again; you muſt, by an unintermitted Induſtry, fan the Sparks of your Spiritual Deſires into a greater Flame. The leaſt Meaſure of Grace in your firſt Converſion, is more valuable than the World; but you muſt every Day be adding ſomething more to the Treaſure, that you may be rich in Faith. Take heed leſt your firſt Love to God decline; you muſt endeavour that it may be more fervent, that your Zeal for good Things may burn with a greater Heat, for your new Birth is in order to a further growth; and as in the States of Age, firſt that which is leſs perfect, and then that which is more ſo, you muſt not becauſe you are freed from Hell therefore be ſatisfied, but enquire what you muſt do for that God that has reſcued you from ſo great a Slavery. Moſt young Converts being tranſported with the greatneſs of the Change, from a State of Darkneſs into a State of Light, think that they have nothing more to know, and but a little more to do, and that they are juſt at the Gate of Heaven: You are happy indeed in being near it, but not only one, but many things are neceſſary to bring them fully thither: Tho you think your ſelves Safe, yet many Dangers attend the Way that you are to go. You muſt practiſe a daily Self-denial, a conſtant obſervation of your Hearts; and beware leſt you be preſumptuous, and confide too much in your own Strength: You have yet aſſurance to obtain, which is not to be had till you arrive to more

more considerable degrees of Grace: you must be very watchful lest your old Lusts find a new welcome, lest you begin to be more cold in your Prayers, more regardless of your Thoughts than you were at your first Conversion; and lest your fleshly Interests and Inclinations which you then abandoned, return to their old Habitation. Young Professors are very apt to backslide, and to grow less serious; take you care lest the Fruit that now buds, be not blasted before it be fully ripe, lest having begun in the Spirit, you end in the Flesh; take heed lest your hopeful Beginnings be not spoiled, and lest new Lusts rise up, and devour all your former good Actions: Be sincere in a forsaking of all your Lusts, let not one remain high in your esteem; for though a *young Saint can never be an old Devil*, yet *a young Hypocrite may be an old Apostate.* Call to mind the Days wherein you were awakened to a sight of Sin, and retain as tender a sense of the Evil of it as you then had.

Tenthly; *Another Rule to be observed by those that would now remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth, is to accustom themselves to frequent Retirement and Solitude.* Most of that Irreligion and Contempt of God that is in the Minds of young People, arises from the Neglect of the many convenient Seasons, which they might improve to Self-Examination: They will not give themselves leave to think, or reflect upon their own Actions; for if they did but separate some little Portions of their Time, though but one quarter of an hour in a day, seriously to think what it is to die, and when that is over, to go to

Judg-

Judgment, and what Pains are neceſſary to prepare them for Things ſo ſolemn, and ſo great; it were morally impoſſible they ſhould forget their Creator, and diſobey his Call. 'Tis not 'long, may the young Man ſay, till this Body 'of mine that was made of Earth and Duſt, ſhall 'be reſolved into common Duſt again; 'tis not 'long till it will be clothed in its laſt Robes, and 'be inſenſible of what is grateful, or delicious; 'it will be worn out like a moth-eaten Garment, 'after all the ſweet Odours and Perfumes, after 'all the Coſt and Charge I have laid out upon it. 'Now then begin, O my Soul, to take thy leave 'of thy deareſt Companion that will ſhortly bid 'thee farewel, and warn thee by its irreparable 'Decays, to ſeek for thy ſelf a more laſting Ha'bitation. Though I have now (might he go 'on in his Meditation) the Company of my Re'lations, and my Friends, yet e're long they will 'ſtand weeping at my Bed's ſide, when they ſee 'me going from them by my ſelf into the ſilent 'melancholy Vale. Though I have now my nu'merous Enjoyments, and my full Tables, yet 'when I have ſat a little longer, I muſt riſe, for 'Death will come and take me away. Such Reflections as theſe, would help young Men very much in the Remembrance of their Creator now, and engage them not to put off ſuch uſeful Thoughts till their dying Day. But alas, the moſt, inſtead of their ſerious Employment, ſlight the Conſideration of God and their Souls from day to day; they run upon the Score, and ſo long ſpend their Subſtance, till like ill Tradeſmen they are unwilling to caſt up their Books,

to

to make up their Accounts, and to look into their own Souls; they ſo long defer to ſpeak with their own Conſciences, till at laſt they have no Meſſage to them, but of Wo and Terror. So it muſt not with be us; we muſt retire from the multitude of Temptations that we meet with in the World, and reckon thoſe happy Seaſons wherein we may converſe with God. The Memory of a Perſon is diſturbed with a great Noiſe; and ſo will our Thoughts be among the buſy Cares and Clamours of the World: Have we time to ſpend among our Acquaintance and our Friends, and have we none for God, that is our beſt Friend? Can we take delight in the Company of others, and yet take none in his, in whom all the Myriads of the bleſſed Angels, and the glorious Saints, and the whole Society of ſincere Worſhippers in the Church on Earth daily rejoice? Can we be ſollicitous *what to eat and drink, and what to put on*; and not be as much careful about the more violent, and preſſing Neceſſities of our Souls? Or, have we any Buſineſs that is more weighty than this, how we may pleaſe our Creator, grow in Grace, and avoid the Wrath to come? We ſhould when we awake, take *the Wings of the Morning*, and fly up to Heaven, and every one of us ſay, *This day will I remember God*; and in the Evening, if we have been ſtedfaſt in our Purpoſe, we muſt praiſe him for his Aſſiſtance, and do the ſame again. No Buſineſs can excuſe any for the neglect of ſo great a Duty. Even the Apprentice muſt remember that he has a great Maſter in Heaven to ſerve; and if the Affairs of his Trade require a more than ordinary care, he

may

may rise a little sooner in the Morning, and go to Bed a little later, as knowing that no Service for others can dispense with the Allegiance he has sworn to God; and that he will never have cause to repent of the Time he spends in serious fervent Prayer: and when the Young Man is in his Retirement, we may suppose him to address himself to his Creator in this or the like manner.

'O my merciful Creator, view from thy sacred Throne a poor Sinner, that am covered 'with Shame and Blushing, when I think that I 'have long, too long been forgetful of thee and 'of my true Self: be thou my Physician, for I 'am diseased; be thou my Satisfaction for all the 'Time I have wandred to and fro in a strange 'Land. I have been seeking Rest, but have 'found none. I am *not worthy to be called thy 'Son any more*; but let thy Bowels yearn over 'a poor Prodigal, that now sees his Error, and 'is resolv'd by thy Assistance, not to run away 'from his Duty, nor to sin again. *O God, my 'God, early will I seek thee, my Soul thirsteth for 'thee, my Flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty 'Land, where no Water is.* 'Tis true, Lord, I 'had once *set mine Eyes on that which was not*; but 'henceforth I will humbly *make mention of thy 'Name*, and contemplate thy Glories, and not 'gaze with Delight on this cheating, vain World 'again. Behold, according to my Baptismal En-'gagement and Vow, I give up what is thy own 'to thee, I surrender all that I have, or am, all 'the Faculties and Powers of my Soul, to be thine 'for ever. And here I now promise, as in thy 'Presence, and as I ever hope to hear a welcome

'Sentence in the Day of Christ, that I will not 'any more be led away with ill Examples, nor 'conspire with Sinners to rebel against Thee; be 'thou therefore, O my gracious Creator, the 'Director of my Steps, the Guide of my Life, 'my Strength in Weakness, my Friend in Trou'ble; and inspire me with Courage and Wisdom 'to manage my self well in the Hour of my Com'bate, when by my old Enemies, the Flesh, the 'Devil and the World, against whom I now de'clare a perpetual War, I shall be set upon.

Eleventhly; *Another Rule that is to be observ'd of those that would remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth, is, To improve the several Passages of Providence, either to the Church of God, or themselves, to this end.* We have all great reason to think of him, and to celebrate his Praise, who, as the Royal Prophet speaks, *Psal.* 111. 4. *has caus'd his wonderful Works to be remembred.* And we of this Nation are more peculiarly engaged thankfully to commemorate the Miracles of his Mercy, which appeared in the great Deliverance that he gave to our Fore-fathers as on this Day, (*the Fifth of November*:) Though we are young, we all share in the blessed Effects of such a wonderful Deliverance. The Papists indeed; that long envied the Welfare of our *Sion*, thought to have made *England* once more a Slave to the Prince of Darkness, and like to *Rome*: even *We* have reason to be thankful; for had their Train been fired, and the Blow given, there had been long e're this nothing to be seen in our Hemisphere, but swarms of Locusts from the bottomless Pit, nothing but Flies and Serpents,

and

and all the Plagues of *Egypt*. And is not *the God of* England, *the God of our Fore-Fathers*, *and our God*, worthy to be remembred? that has hitherto kept these Frogs from croaking in our Houses and Bed-Chambers? Far be it from us either to forget such a God, or to mock him, as we shall, if we thank him for our Escape out of the House of Bondage, and yet (as too many in our days) be willing to return again thither: If, like foolish Children, we cry for the Leeks and Garlick of others, when we have at home better Food. 'Tis fit we should remember the *God of this great Deliverance*, that so we may never leave our own pure and holy Faith, for an Idolatrous, and a false Religion, the Religion of *Rome*, (that is indeed a scandal to the Name) and that instead of Meekness and Love, the true Lineaments of all the Followers of Jesus, has by its cruel Designs no other than the Features of the Devil, the *great Murderer from the beginning*. And when the Plotters delighted in those *Works of Darkness*, they acted as true Children of him their Father, who flies the Light. When they *digg'd as deep as Hell*, they were but in their own Element; for all they that are born from Heaven, carry upon them Forbearance, Peace, and Innocence, which is to resemble indeed a patient holy God. I am the more willing to enlarge upon this, both because of the Respect I bear to that Authority that enacted the Observation of this as a Day of general Thanksgiving over all the Nation; and because young Men (to some of which the Providence of God has given me this occasion chiefly to speak) are more liable to be deceived

with Error, and the Pretences of the Romish Church, than others are: but I hope, when we remember this *Hellish Plot*, we shall have an everlasting *Abhorrence* of that cruel Sect, that conceives and brings forth, and by its established Doctrines, avows and legitimates such monstrous Villanies, to carry on or abet which, a sober Heathen would be asham'd. Let us still remember the Author of *this great Mercy*, and then, though we may be assaulted, even while we are Young, with their Batteries, we shall never be so foolish as to embrace their Opinions, and leave our own well-grounded Faith; which were to prefer Night before the Day, Imprisonment before a *Jubile*, and the Clouds of *Egypt* before the pleasant Light of our *Goshan*. Then we shall not, when we are *free-born*, long for Slavery; nor when we are unaccustom'd to the Yoke, pray that it may be put upon our Necks. This remembrance of the Mercy of our Creator will preserve us, that we shall never be so undutiful as to leave our *Jerusalem* which is *from Above*, and free, the Mother of us all, to run to a Stranger, to their *Hagar*, which *gendreth to Bondage*; from the Protestant Religion to Popery, whose Children, like the Children of *Negroes*, under the Service of our Merchants in Foreign Plantations, are in a State of Bondage as soon as they enter into the World. Thus ought the former Deliverances that have been granted to our Fore-Fathers, the Blessings of which are by them conveyed to us, to stir us up to remember God; as also those that we have enjoyed in our Days, particularly that from the late

late *Popiſh Plot*, which has hitherto by his Mercy been prevented from bringing forth our Ruin and Deſolation; and it will never be able to do that, unleſs our forgetfulneſs of God midwive it into the World. Nor ought we to forget the late Revolution upon the Fifth of *November*, when our preſent Proteſtant King, guided by the Providence of God, and the Prayers of many good People, and his own zealous Courage, hazarded his Perſon to promote our Good, and to free us from Popery and Slavery: This ought to kindle our Thanks and our Love to God, by whom we now ſit at eaſe, while other Countries are groaning under the Miſeries of a doleful War. We have had a large Experience of his Goodneſs, which is continued in large Meaſures to this very Day; ſo that we have reaſon to cry out with that Holy Man, *How precious are thy Thoughts unto us, O God? how great is the Sum of them?* Pſal. 139. 17. It is too great to be numbred: And ſhall we anſwer all his Care and Love with Oblivion, Contempt and Scorn? Shall we forget him, when all our Mercies, and all the Creatures would lead us to him, as the Star did the *Wiſe Men* to Chriſt? How many things may we daily obſerve, which with a little conſideration would help us to remember God? Thus if I ſee one that is poor and diſeaſed, and begs about the Streets, and has no Friends to help him, I ought to remember God, and thank him that it is not my ſad Caſe. When I ſee others on their Death-beds, I ought to remember him, that while he ſmites the Tabernacle of another, ſpares mine. When I am well, I ſhould praiſe

the Author of my Health; and when I am pained, bless him that my Pains are not the Tortures and Woes of Hell. When I see one that will be drunk, and swear, I should remember my Creator, and bless him for restraining me from the like Sins; and that when others are running to Destruction, he has shewed me the sweet Path of Life. Thus every young Man, whatever his Calling, State or Condition be, whether he be at Home or Abroad, may by heavenly serious Ejaculations, still remember God, and *walk in his Fear all the Day long*, Prov. 23. 17. The Tradesman may do it in his Shop, the Student in his Closet, and the Diseased on his Sick-bed; and when the Fire of such Meditations shall burn in our Souls, it will scare away vain Thoughts, and discourage the roaring Lion, and the other Beasts of the Forest, when they would fain set upon us.

Twelfthly; *Let us improve the Deaths of other Young Men to this purpose, that we may remember our Creator, and prepare for our own.* How many have we known that were of as healthful and vigorous a Constitution as we are, that by a Surfeit, or an acute Feaver, have in a few days been snatch'd away? How many that were travelling on the same Road with us a while ago, are now at their long Home, lying in the Grave; and should not we by their early Departure, *learn to die?* It would not be tedious to us in this Sense, to live in *Golgotha*, or to *dwell among the Tombs*, when we have in them seen *the End of all Men*, Eccles. 7. 2. We should not any more love the World, nor its Enjoyments and Plea-

sures,

fires, seeing they will vanish in the twinkling of an Eye; and after all the poor Satisfaction they have given us, fall into the dead Sea. The Passing-Bells of others loudly tell us, that *Man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity*, Psal. 39. 5. and what they have undergone, will in a few Days or Hours more, be our own Lot. Though they are gone before, we must tread in their Steps, and go the same way. When that Hour is come, all our Friends and Acquaintance cannot hold us; for we that now hear, and move, and speak, shall fly away into a vast Expanse, and not *behold Man with the Inhabitants of this World any more*, Isa. 38. 11. As we have seen the pale Looks, and have heard the last Voice of others, so shall we our selves in the like manner be made Spectacles of Mortality to those that remain after us. We, and all our Companions, must take a long Farewel of each other, and not meet again till the Day of the general Resurrection. And is it too soon to remember our Creator, when we have seen many as Young as we are, breath their last? And we that now mourn for others, know not how soon our Friends may do the same for us, and celebrate our Funerals. Or, shall we be excusable, if we do not secure our selves, and prepare to be gone, when we have seen the Houses of our Neighbours fired, and have been often told, that our own will decay? Do we thus requite that God that has given us a longer time and space wherein to repent? And when he has spared us beyond the Weakness of our Infant-Age, shall we be Children in Understanding, shall we never come to

Years of Diſcretion, and know what is for our Good? When God took away many others, that we knew he might at the ſame time, or before, have taken away you or me; and why do we ſurvive their Death, but that we may ſet *our House in order*, and be well prepared for the time of our Change, that will ſoon be at hand? If we do not now repent, what ſhall we ſay to the patient God hereafter, that when the Arrows have been ſhot on the right and left, has made them to paſs by us? Others are cut down, and we are yet ſtanding in the Vineyard, but to what end, but that we may to his Praiſe bring forth much early Fruit? If we do not thus, what Plea ſhall we make at his Bar, and how ſhall we meet our Parents and our holy Friends in the day of Judgment? The Time is coming, when Riches and Honour, Health and Beauty, Credit and Reputation among Men, will be of no value, nor will Gold and Silver, the Idols of this, be currant in the next World. We ſhould not therefore be like thoſe young People that are only ſerious in the Houſe of Mourning, or when they ſee their Friends carried to the Grave, but in the next vain Company ſuffer the Impreſſions of their Mortality to wear off again. We muſt be always ſober in our Converſation, as not knowing when we our ſelves ſhall be gone; only this we may know, that as the Years we have already lived are ſoon paſt, ſo will thoſe that are to come with the ſame ſwift Motion paſs away. The longeſt Life here on Earth is but as a Moment, if compar'd with the future Eternity: 'Tis as a flaſh of Lightning to the whole Element

of

of Fire, juſt ſeen, and then vaniſh'd. And can it after all this, be too ſoon to ſerve our Creator, with our beſt Affections to implore his Pardon, to call on his Name, when e're long there will be no more uſe of Prayer, no more the Tenders of Salvation, no more Time? God does by the Death of our Friends and Acquaintance, ſend us loud Warnings to prepare for our own; let us not flatter our ſelves with the too great Hopes of long Life, becauſe of our preſent Health and Strength, for ſome *die even in their full Strength*, and whilſt their Bones are moiſtned with Marrow: And though your Bodies have not been undermined with many Infirmities and languiſhing Decays, yet you know not but that the firſt Storm that comes may ſhatter them to pieces. O remember your Creator, that hath been pleaſed when he cut off many others, to ſpare you, and ſo renew to you Time and Opportunity, whilſt others are in the ſilent Grave; they are gone, and have heard their Sentence whilſt you have yet a Day of Grace to prepare for the Great Eternity that is to come.

Thirteen; *If we would Remember our Creator now in the Days of our Youth, let us think with our ſelves how dreadful our Caſe would be, ſhould we be ſurprized by Death before we had done this.* If we cannot perform this Work now, when our earthly Houſe is in good Repair, how ſhall we do it, when the Foundations, and the Building both will be deſtroyed; and, it may be, ſtruck to the Ground on a ſudden, as with a Clap of Thunder? If we find our ſelves indiſpoſed for our ordinary

dinary Business with an aking Head, or Tooth; do we think to mind our Salvation when every Part of our Bodies shall be rackt with the most violent, and painful Agonies; and when we shall have no Intervals of Ease, but be rudely treated by the Diseases that come before to clear the way for the King of Terrors? Or, shall we stay till the Blow be given, or the Season past? It may be we think there is no Danger, or that we shall have time enough hereafter; but our Disease is not the less for our Insensibility; and to conceit our selves well, when in the Judgment of God, and his Word, we are much out of Order, is the worst Symptom of our approaching Death. What better would it be for a sick Man to fall into a Slumber, and to dream of Health, when he is given over as hopeless, and not for this World any longer? What better would he be to think his Candle will last for many Hours, when it is just falling into the Socket, and yields but a little dying Blaze, which he through Mistake fancies a true lasting Flame? What better would a Prisoner be to dream, in the Night, of Freedom, and a Pardon, when he sees the Officer entring in the Morning, to carry him away to Execution? And shall we be in a better State, if we put off our Creator with Delays, till *Death enter into the Windows*, and deprive us of our Light, and seizing on us by a Warrant from God, hale us away to the Prison of the Grave, and to the glorious awful Tribunal, whether we will or not? In what Mountains shall we seek a refuge, if we make no Provision for our selves till the Floods come, and

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the weak Pillars whereon we now lean, be with'd away? How many young Men are now awake, and that for ever, in the Flames of Hell, that never would open their Eyes till they came thither? That *were taken away living, and in the Wrath of God, before their Pots could feel the Thorns*, (Pſal. 58. 9.) before they had any real Senſe of their near Danger? And as the Caſe of that Perſon is very ſad, that when he has been newly rack'd, and while he is yet ſore and pained, is to be carried again to the Torture: So is theirs, that are twice to die, whoſe Souls go trembling from the Body, to more intolerable Pains; that go from the firſt, to the ſecond, from a Temporal, to an Eternal Death. How many are now in the Regions of perpetual Storms, that thought, becauſe their Sun once ſhin'd, they ſhould always have good Weather, and a clear Day? For God's Sake then, and for our own, let us be Religious betimes, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be bound with Cords, in the Houſes of our Enemies, with more Sins; leſt we loſe our *Strength, and God depart from us, when we think*, like *Sampſon*, (Judg. 16. 20.) in the Hands of the Philiſtines, to *riſe and go abroad* with the ſame Freedom that we did at other times. The Lamp of our Life may be drown'd with too much Moiſture, or when we think all is calm, be blown out with a ſudden Blaſt, or a ſtormy Wind, and leave us in the Dark; and when it has once expired, there will be no Supplies of Oil to make it burn again. And then, like the blinded Youth of *Sodom*, (Gen. 19. 11.) we ſhall reel to and fro, and not find a Door of Hope; till

till we feel the ſcalding Drops of Vengeance, that will by degrees ſwell into a Flood, and carry us away to the great Lake of Fire. This will be the Conſequent of our vain Delays; and O how dreadful will it be, when inſtead of the Boſom of *Abraham*, we ſhall find our ſelves in the cold Arms of Deſpair; and inſtead of the Joys of Heaven, have in our guilty Souls, *the Worm that never dies*? Mark 9. 44. If Men break in the World, they may by the kind Aſſiſtance of their Friends, and Benefactors, be ſet up again. If they be Impriſoned, they may through the Mediation of the ſame be releas'd; but what ſhall become of thoſe, that have no Friends, that have nothing wherewith to pay their Debts, and muſt languiſh and pine away in a tedious Bondage, never to be eaſed of their Sorrows, never to be releaſed? And ſuch, and more dreadful, will be the State of thoſe young Men, that are ſurpriz'd in the moment of their Wickedneſs, and laid in the Chains of Hell unawares. Dare we then forget our Creator now, when whole Troops of ſo great Calamities are upon the March againſt us, and we know not when their Leader, that rides upon the *pale Horſe*, (Rev. 6, 8.) will give the Word, and command them to fall upon us? If we now diſregard the Checks of our own Conſciences, they will hereafter challenge us to give them Satisfaction, and be revenged on us, for all the Affronts that we have put upon them. Sleep on we may, but it will be very ſad, if we awake not before the Decree for our Execution be gone forth, and before the killing Sword is at our Breaſts. If we will take no

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Care, *even when our Feet ſtand in ſlippery Places*, (Pſal. 73. 18.) we may ſlide into the dark Pit, from which there will be no Redemption. We may be ſurprized with the loud Thunder, and the roaring Cannon, when we think there is no Danger: and, when we flatter our ſelves with the vain Hopes of Peace and Safety, ſudden Deſtruction may come upon us, as Travail upon a Woman with Child. To what ſhall I compare the Miſeries of that young Man, that is taken away in the midſt of all his Pleaſures, and before he hath well thought of Death? 'Tis as dreadful, as if you ſhould ſee a Perſon in the midſt of all his Mirth and Laughter, immediately fall down Dead, ſo that he cannot by all the Tears of his Friends, nor by all the Chafing, and Application, that are made, be fetch'd to Life again. A Surprizal that carries with it as great Horror and Amazement, as does the ſudden falling of a cruel Enemy into the Tents of a luxurious wanton Army; that ſpares neither Young nor Old, that *mingles their Blood with the Sacrifices* they made to their luſtful Appetites, and gives them no time either to arm, or to cry for Quarter. 'Tis as dreadful, as if a Maſſacre ſhould happen among a company of little Children playing in the Street, that, while they ſuſpected nothing, are cut in a thouſand pieces, and carried away to the other World in a Sea of their own Blood. The ſudden untimely Death of careleſs young Men, is as dreadful as a general Inundation, that while Men are aſleep, breaks over all Bounds, and carries them, their Houſes, and their Goods, away together. Have

we

we then no Pity for our ſelves, or do we reſolve not to prepare for our Trial, till the Aſſize come, and the Judg is ſeated on the Bench? Is it a ſmall, or a tolerable thing, to be ſnatch'd away in one Moment from Life and Hope, to have our Souls violently torn from our Bodies, and to be ſent from under the Dews of Heaven, and a chearful pleaſant Habitation; to be ſcorched with flaming Wrath, and to live in a *Land of Darkneſs*, where is all that can afflict or grieve the ſeparated Spirit? If we were aſſured by certain Intelligence from the unſeen World, that this were the laſt Sermon we were to hear; this the laſt time that we ſhould have a Call to Remember God, and to Repent; and that before we enjoy another of the Days of the Son of Man, we ſhould hear our final Doom, and be either in Heaven above, or Hell beneath: O, with what Cries ſhould we rend the Heavens, with what Earneſtneſs ſhould we pour out our Souls in Prayer, and as a Criminal that is condemned to die, and is not ready for ſo great a Change, make uſe of all our Friends to beg of God that he would Reprieve us, and ſpare us a little longer! that we may acquaint our ſelves with him, and make our Peace *before we go hence, and be no more*, Pſal. 39. 13. With how many Tears ſhould we then bewail our early Follies, and not liſten to the Charms of ſenſual worldly Pleaſures, or the Temptations of the Devil! And why ſhould we not do the ſame now, ſeeing we know not but that may be our Caſe? We know neither the Hour, or the Day when our Lord will come, (*Mat.* 24. 42.) nor when Death, that

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is by his Commiſſion going its Circuit, and has already paſt its Sentence upon many others, will arrive at our Place, and call us alſo to the Bar.

Conſid. 1. *This remembrance of your Creator, will be a very powerful Means to reſtrain you from Sin, and to quicken you to all neceſſary Duty.* You will not dare to break his Laws, when you conſider that you are always in the Preſence of your Judg; you will tremble at his Power, and reverence his Greatneſs, and be afraid to provoke him, when you remember the Greatneſs and Terror of his Wrath; you will chearfully obey him, when you remember the Condeſcenſions and the Sweetneſs of his Love; you will ſeek his Favour, when you remember how good a Friend he is; and dread his Diſpleaſure, when you know that he is our Enemy whom none can reſiſt. With what care will you live, when you know that you are always before him, that his piercing Eye diſcerns the way you take, that he ſees you in all your Retirements, and that the Darkneſs and the Light make no difference as to him who obſerves all things, and who is every where. This will move you to be faithful Souldiers in your Holy War, when you conſider (that all the while you are engaged) your General is looking on; and this will move you to be unblameable in Holineſs, for there is not a ſudden Thought, not an unbecoming Advance to what is Evil, not the leaſt Conſent to an impure Suggeſtion, but he knows it. As the Devil is always near us to tempt us, ſo is God near to ponder and weigh our Actions; he is with us in our travelling and ſitting ſtill at Home and Abroad,

Abroad, in our Closets and in publick Assemblies: It will excite us to an holy Behaviour in all that we set about when we remember him. We would not have a Friend or a Visitant to find us undress'd, or in a posture not suitable to entertain him; and how much more Care should we take lest we do any thing unbecoming the Presence of so great a King? with what seriousness and gravity should we speak, with what care should we think, with what fervour should we pray, with what diligence should we work, seeing our Creator and our Judg is still looking on? The frequent Thoughts of God will be a great relief to our Minds, when we are weary, and faint, and perplexed, and overwhelmed with multitudes of other uneasy Thoughts. When we are at a loss, he can guide and teach us, and lead us into the right way; when we are in Doubts, he can give us Satisfaction, and render those Truths clear and plain to us, which without his Light, would be mysterious and unfathomable: 'Tis the great Father of Lights, who can chase away that Obscurity and Darkness which is the Grievance and Trouble of the Soul; and when you dig for Knowledg, as for hidden Treasure, he can tell you where the rich Vein lies, that others miss of after a long and tedious search, for without his Assistance and Direction 'tis never to be found.

Cons. 2. *The best of your Time, such as is that of Youth, is to be consecrated unto God.* No Incense can be too sweet, no Obedience too early, no Sacrifice too precious to be laid upon his Altars; he is so excellent in himself, and so good to you, that

that he well deſerves your firſt Thoughts, the Flower of your Strength, and the Vigour of your Spirits; and will you delay and hope to put him off with the Dregs of a decrepit Age? How baſe a thing is it to give away from God all that we are in the poſſeſſion of, and leave only that portion of our Time for him, wherein naturally we can do nothing but lament our Infirmities and Miſeries? and to deſign old Age for the Satisfaction of our youthful Debts, is as if a Merchant ſhould account his Creditor ſatisfied by a Shipwrack, or ſome other Ruin of his Eſtate: Will not this be very diſingenuous, an Act of the greateſt and moſt abominable Ingratitude, then only to ſeek to pleaſe God, when we can no longer ſin with that eagerneſs that we uſed to do? Is it Creature-like, to make him ſtay for the poor Fragments of your Time, whilſt you have ſerved the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, with the beſt you had to entertain them with? You ſhould ſerve him with the firſt Fruits of your Encreaſe, ſeing all that you enjoy, you reap from the Bleſſings of his bounteous Hand. *Mal.* 1. 14. *Curſed be the Deceiver, that hath in his Flock a Male, and offereth to the Lord a corrupt Thing.* We are obliged, in gratitude to him, to flee and abhor our Luſts. *Rom.* 12. 1. Have we not our Life, and all the good Things we enjoy, from him? And ſhall we thus requite him, to love and harbour what he deteſts and loaths? Shall we, to gratify the Devil who has always done us hurt, grieve and vex, and diſhonour that God that is our beſt Benefactor? Muſt we thus requite

him for our Health, and Friends, and daily Bread, and our convenient Habitations, and for the hope we have of everlasting Mercies, that should be much sweeter to us than all things here below? And shall we run from his arms and imbraces, into the Snares that Satan spreads for us even in our sight? Our Souls, our Thoughts, our Love, and our Desire, are too good for that ugly Fiend, tho nothing can be too good for God. "All the "Creatures (as one says) by his appoint-"ment, serve us with the best they have; the "Beasts give us their best Fat, the Trees their "best Fruit, the Sun its best Light, the Foun-"tains their best Streams; and shall we not "give the best of our Time, our most lively "and active Age, to such a God, that has or-"dered the chief of other Things for our Ac-"commodation? Shall we not sacrifice our "dearest Lusts at his Request, seeing he sacri-"ficed his well-beloved and his only Son for "us? Or, shall we think that he that dwells in "a place so Holy and Magnificent, as the Hea-"ven of Heavens, will dwell in our Hearts "while they are full of Sin? Are such vile Com-"panions fit for the Lord of Glory?

Consid. 3. *The remembrance of God in your early tender Age, will be most grateful to Him.* As a Prince treats those with greater Favour that surrender at the first Invitation to Mercy, than those that continue long in Arms and Rebellion against him, before they can be brought to acknowledg their Obedience and Duty: It is more ingenuous to be prevailed upon with the first

firſt Calls of Chriſt, than to put him to the labour and pains of many repeated Invitations. Prov. 8. 17. *Thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.* *Jer.* 2. 2, 3. Of all the Apoſtles, St. *John* was called the *Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; and he was uſed with a greater tenderneſs, becauſe he was, as moſt think, the youngeſt of the reſt. You may expect from the Redeemer, great Manifeſtations of his Love, and feel more the ſweet Influences and Bleſſings of his Government, when you with the firſt chuſe him for your King, and ſuffer him to have an early Reign over your Hearts. How grateful muſt it be to him to ſee you betimes on your Knees, in a poſture of Humiliation, begging for Mercy, and pleading the Merits of his Death? That Fruit is moſt valuable, which is the ſooneſt ripe: The Roſe then ſmells the ſweeteſt, when 'tis refreſh'd with the morning Dew, and when it opens with the riſing Sun. You will be no loſers by an early dedication of your ſelves to God; what you want in ſenſual Mirth and Delights, will be made up in heavenly Joys: Angels will rejoice at ſo good a Change, and enter upon the Office of being Guardians to you, with the greateſt readineſs. When you have liſted your ſelves under the Banners of their Lord and yours, they will tend you, and watch over you with a very loving Care. When you give up your ſelves to God betimes, it will be more grateful than if you ſhould make the ſame Preſent but very late: he loveth a chearful and a ſpeedy giver. You your ſelves prize more a Benefit that is received

at the first asking, than if your Friend stand long demurring whether he shall confer upon you such a Favour or not. What is quickly given, has the value of a double Gift.

Consid. 4. *'Tis contrary to your rational Nature, to be led away with vile and brutish Lusts, and so to forget God.* You ought not to be carried away with the appearances of Good, but to examine what is that Good which is truly solid and abiding, and not to run with so much force to what is delightful, unless you find it at the same time to be truly profitable. It is not the glittering of Things that is to arrest your diligence; as it is not verdure and greenness of the Leaves that must please you, unless you find real Fruit. You leave the way of Reason, when you search for Things that are only pleasant. It is no Sin in the Bruits, to gratify their Appetites to the full, for they are not capable of being governed by Laws; they have not such noble Faculties as you, to conduct and regulate your Actions; but if you allow your selves an unrestrained Liberty in what you desire, you degrade your Nature, and are to be greatly responsible for the abuse of a Talent so excellent as your Reason is: You have a Capacity to think of God, and of Things unseen, and do you think that this Capacity was given you in vain? And surely, that God that has given you a Government over the other Creatures, would have you to exercise a due Government over your selves, in a due submission to his great Power and Authority.

Consid. 5. *This fleeing of youthful Lusts, will procure*

procure a comfortable Age. Thoſe that lay up Money betimes, find their Heap ſwelled to a conſiderable Bulk in the ſpace of many Years. Your Graces muſt needs be very ſtrong, if you have been adding new degrees to your firſt Stock in the time of Youth; having long ſtood in the Vineyard, you will flouriſh to the very laſt, and by an holy Antiperiſtaſis, when your Bodies are chill'd and cold with Age, your Souls will have more inward Warmth and Fervour; and your Example muſt needs be then very remarkable; as that Fruit would be much look'd upon, that ſhould appear amidſt the Froſt and Snow of Winter. Thus will you have a ſweet Odour, when the Flower of Youth is decayed; and though your Eyes be dim, yet ſhall you ſee the Light of Heaven; though your palſied Hands tremble with the weakneſs of Age, yet you ſhall lay hold on Eternal Life; tho like *Barzillai*, you taſte neither what you eat or drink, yet you ſhall not loſe the Reliſh of the Love of God. Though you take no delight in Banquets or publick Entertainments, or great Feaſts, yet you ſhall have better Meat to feed upon; and the Goodneſs and Purity of your Conſciences, ſhall furniſh you with continued Dainties and Refreſhment; and that he that was the God of your Youth, will not forſake you when you are old. As you have adhered to his Intereſt, ſo will he regard your Peace and Welfare. Prov. 16. 31. *The hoary Head is a Crown of Glory, if it be found in the way of Righteouſneſs,* Pſalm 71. 5. And when you are weary of a Life of Sorrow, and of the evil

Days of your Pilgrimage, he will tranſlate you to a Life of Joy, and to your bleſſed Home; you ſhall then have the Light of his Face, and his Staff and Supports to lean upon. You ſhall not tremble when you ſee your ſelves at the Borders of the Grave, nor be afraid to go thither. As you are laden with Years, ſo will you be laden with Fruit alſo, and gathered into his Garner like Corn that is fully ripe. Men take a ſingular pleaſure in the finiſhing of ſome great Work that has been long in hand, as in Building, Travelling, Writing, and the like; how much more in putting the laſt Period to an holy Life? That thoſe unconſtant Revolutions and Viciſſitudes of your Age, has not been able to divert the great Purpoſe and Deſign, and their Life runs out clearly to the laſt Drop; there are no bitter Dregs left, but 'tis Sweetneſs to the Bottom.

Conſid. 6. *But if you ſhould not flee your youthful Luſts, great and intolerable will be the Miſeries of your decaying Age.* You are engaged in the Frolick, and Debauches, and Heat of Youth; they drown for a little while the painful Senſe of Sin, but all theſe will then be brought to your remembrance, when the Fumes and Vapors are diſſolved that ſtupified your Hearts, and made you to be without Remorſe. "When Men "come (as one ſays) to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, "Pſal. 25. 7. *Remember not, Lord, the Sins of "my Youth*; one of the hardeſt Points is, their "own forgetting them, ſince the Ghoſts of "their dead Sins walk in their Fancy, and di-

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" vert much of that Time that they aſſign for " the diſcharge of their Arrears; and they " *bear the Reproach of Youth*, Jer. 31. 19. How will it cover an old Sinner with Shame and Bluſhing, when he ſhall conſider how he has ſpent a long Life, either in doing nothing to purpoſe, or in doing ill, to think upon the Review, that he has been travelling all his Days in the way of Hell! O how will he be ready to wiſh that he had never lived at all, that he had never been truſted with any Time, or Strength, or Health, rather than to have thrown all theſe away in Vanity. Every Day, every Year that he has paſt in Folly, will bring in a new Accuſation againſt him, a new Load and Weight to ſink his amaz'd Soul in Deſpair and Horror. I might have had, will he ſay, the Pardon of my Sin, the Love of God, the Hope of Heaven as well as others; but I trampled on the Grace that was offered, and ſcorn'd the Saviour that pleaded with me from time to time. I careſſed my ſenſual Pleaſure, and it is now fled away; and the God who alone can help me, has forſaken me, and ſhuts out my Cries, and is gone away too: As I did not mind him in my Youth, he does not remember me in my Age, and my deſolate Condition. *O that it were with me as in the days of Old, when the Candle of the Lord ſhined upon my Tabernacle*, Job 29. 1, 2, 3. O that I had my Time again which I ſpent for the Service of the Devil and my own Sin! O that I might but have another Trial! Alas, my Sun is now ſetting, never to riſe again! Now my

Work is all to do, and I have but a very little Space to do it in! Now I am deſtitute of all that is truly needful; and when I look back upon my former Actions, I ſee nothing but what fills me with Amazement and Woe: I want that Faith, that Joy, that Aſſurance, thoſe comfortable Reflections that I might have had; I might now have had an Harveſt of Peace to reap, but I ſee nothing in my ill-ſpent Life but Thorns and Briars that upbraid my Folly, and that wound my Soul. Such will be the bitterneſs of an aged Sinner, when he is awakened to ſee his Sin; and though he be an hundred Years Old, yet will he be ſtill accurſt in old Age; not only his own Sins will be his Torment, but the Sins of others that were committed through the power of his ill Example. How many have been deſtroyed, by the Poiſon that he prepared for them, by his Exceſſes and Temptations, by his vain and idle Words? How many young Perſons, how many of his Neighbours may be in Hell, whom he was the Cauſe of conveying thither? and that he cannot, though he ſhould repent and mourn out the ſmall remainder of his Days, bring any of theſe back again. Thus God *writes bitter things againſt him, and makes him to poſſeſs the Iniquities of his Youth*, Job 13. 26. With how little patience can an old Sinner hear his Diſtempers and Pains, when he conſiders that the Intemperance and the Luſts of his Youth were the Cauſes of all theſe, and that he then ſmarts for all his early Follies? Job 20. 11. *His Bones are full of the Sins of his Youth.* All other Knowledg

ledg is to no purpoſe, ſeeing he has not learned to know his God. How little pleaſure can he take in ſtating his Accounts, when he knows that he has been running in Debt all his Days? What Wrath, what vaſt heaps of Wrath muſt cruſh him to pieces, when he has been ſo long treaſuring it up for himſelf againſt the Day of Wrath? And ſuch has an Hell on Earth, a deſire of gratifying his former Luſts, and a weakneſs that ſuffers him not to purſue them as he uſed to do, the Habits of Sin remaining on him, and to be acting over all his former Wickedneſs in imagination, to have ſtill a propenſion to the ſame Vices. "Thus, St. *Auſtin* ſays, after "he had caſt off the Images of youthful Vani-"ties from all adherence to his Will, they "ſtole after his Fancy, though they were not "ſo bold as to face his Conſent, but, as it were, "muttering behind him, and ſnatching at him "to make him look back. And that which encreaſes the Miſery of ſuch old Sinners is, that their Sins muſt lie down with them in the Duſt; as they were the Companions of their Lives, they will be the Companions of their Death. All thoſe moral Accompliſhments of Vertue, of Prudence and Fortitude, Civility, Learning, and Ingenuity, which recommended them to the Eyes and the Praiſe of Men, will leave them, but all that is Evil will attend them thither; and curſed are they that die ſo, for their evil Works follow them, they die in their Sins, *John* 8. 21. Happy would they be, or at leaſt leſs miſerable, if theſe could be left behind; but their Works muſt follow

low them, as Souldiers to guard a Priſoner in his Chains; as ſo many Serpents clinging about them, that are the Cauſe of their Death, and that gnaw and feed upon them when they are Dead; they lie down with them as ſo many miſerable Creatures in a Den of Lions, where they are torn to pieces; and as they lie down with them, ſo will they riſe again to witneſs againſt them. And O what a dreadful ſight will that be, when the curſed Sinner riſes out of the Grave, and ſees the terrible Face of the Judg, ſees the Confuſion of the wicked World, and all the Sins that ever he committed brought to Light, and ſet in order before him to juſtify his approaching Doom! Then ſhall the Books be opened, *Rev.* 20. 12. then they ſhall know that the God whom they forgot, took notice of their Crimes; they ſhall ſee that all their Actions, their Thoughts, their Diſcourſes, were Regiſtred, with all the particular Circumſtances; in what Place, with what Perſons, and after what manner; with what obſtinacy and eagerneſs they ſinned: not one Sin will be miſſing there, of all thoſe which they were guilty of in their Youth, their middle, and their old Age. As you would prevent all this Miſery, and prevent a Sight ſo terrible, now forſake the Luſts of your Youth, and then all your Iniquities ſhall be blotted out, and the Judg will be your Friend.

Conſid. 7. *If you do not flee your youthful Luſts, what a grief and vexation it will be to your Parents, to think that they have brought forth Children to the Murtherer?*

Murtherer? That all the care they take to maintain and provide for you, is but for ſuch as are the Slaves of Satan, and for ſuch as are like to be the Brands of Hell. How will it grieve them to think that thoſe who they ſo dearly love, are like to be the Fuel of that Fire; that they who dwell in their Families are like to dwell in Eternal Burnings? With what ſad Hearts do they look upon you, whilſt they ſee you running ſo faſt to your own Deſtruction, and no better by all the Prayers they make, by all the Tears they ſhed, by all their Inſtructions and Reproofs? And will you ſtill forget God, and indulge thoſe Luſts which are hurtful to your ſelves, as well as Uncomfortable to them? will you thus requite them for all the Pains they have been at in your Education? Is this all the Recompence they muſt have, to be ſcorn'd, and derided, and diſobeyed? Will you make their Lives uneaſy, and ſhorten their Days that gave Life to you, and that take ſo much care to preſerve it? They travel in Birth again, that Chriſt may be formed in you, and will you render all their Endeavours abortive, and deprive them of their Hopes? They ſee the Snares in which you are entangled, they ſee to what a dreadful Place you are haſtning, and would fain, if they could, prevent your going thither: they would fain pull you out of the Mouth of the roaring Lion; but all will be in vain, if you conſent not to be delivered, and to be ſafe: be not therefore cruel to your ſelves, and cruel to them that are ſo full of pity and Compaſſion to you. It is a freſh Grief to them

them to think that their ſlighted Counſel and Advice muſt make your Woes more intollerable; for though you bury what they now ſay to you in forgetfulneſs, yet all their Words and Entreaties will have a Reſurrection. O what an amazing Day will that be to you when the holy Speeches and Examples of your Parents muſt riſe againſt you and condemn you? how will you be confounded, when you ſee them ſtanding at the Right Hand of Chriſt, and your ſelves upon the Left? when you ſee them ſtanding there to Evidence againſt you, as they muſt if they meet you at that Great Tribunal in an Unregenerate Condition: And they that are now ſo compaſſionate, muſt then approve the ſevere Sentence of the mighty Judg; they will no more weep and pray for you as they uſed to do; you will no more be their Children, but the Prey of Devils; you will be no more the Objects of their Pitty, nor be within the reach of their help; they muſt with all the happy Saints then rejoice to ſee you thrown down with all the Enemies of Chriſt, and with all other diſobedient Children, into the Lake of Fire: and the fore thoughts of ſo ſad a Ruin does now pierce their Hearts, and take away the pleaſure of their Lives, and ſend them mourning to the Grave. On the contrary, it will be a great relief to them under all the Calamities of Life, if they ſee you dutiful and obedient. With what pleaſure will they ſee you reading good Books, and repairing to your Cloſets, and delighted with Prayer, whilſt the Children of others are led away with the Vanities

ties of Youth; to see you patient of Advice, and willing to be reproved, whilst others are obstinate, and perverse, and self-willed? It is a Joy to your Parents to see you thrive betimes, by an early diligence and sobriety; but a much greater Joy to see you minding your Creator, and seeking him whilst he may be found. With what pleasure will they think, that they that are now of their Family, are like to be numbred with that in Heaven; and that they who now converse together here, shall have a better and a more lasting Communication there? That you that are born of them, shall bear up the Name of Christ, and the Honour of Religion, when they are gone, and spread Religion when they are not capable of doing any further Service; that you shall praise God when they are silent in the Dust, and that you and they shall meet again in the Heavenly Quire, and make the Musick there more loud and sweet; and if those that are defiled have any such sense of things below, it will make them more to rejoice in that happy Place, to think that you whom they planted in the Vineyard, are bringing forth Fruit to their Master's Glory; and that there is a new accession of Souls to Christ by the benefit of your holy Example. With what Comfort will your dying Parents then leave you their Estates, when they know that you will do good with what you have, and not spend what they got, in Riots and Luxuries and Prodigalities? It will be easier for them to leave the World, when they consider that he who was their God, is also become your God;

God; and that when they can be your Friends no more, yet you ſhall have ſuch a kind and everlaſting Friend, and be ſecured from the dangers of Sin and Hell, by the Bleſſing and the Grace of his Providence. And with what delight will they make their appearance at the laſt Day, when they ſhall be able to ſay to God, Behold, here are we, and the Children thou haſt given us.

Conſid. 8. *This will make you to be great Bleſſings to the Places where you live.* It is not ſo great a wonder to ſee old Men to deſpiſe the World, when they are wearied with Cares, and humbled with many Croſſes and Afflictions, as to ſee Young Men to deſpiſe all its Allurements in the heat and ſtrength of Age, when they are moſt capable to taſte its Sweets and Pleaſures. 'Tis an honour to be an early Conqueror and a Young Martyr, for you are ſo when you have Sacrificed your Luſts. What a glorious ſight is it to ſee you to anticipate your Time, and to bring forth the Prudence, the Courage, the Wiſdom, that is the ordinary Fruit of decaying Years! in the prime of Youth to be compos'd, and grave, and ſage in all your Sayings, your Deeds, and your other Motions, which others arrive to but by ſlow Degrees, and a long ſpace of Time? and to ſee a Young *Moſes* ſcorn all the Pomp and Bravery of an honourable Preferment, and to chuſe rather to ſuffer, than to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin for a ſeaſon? What a glorious ſight to ſee a chaſte *Joſeph* in the midſt of earneſt and importunate Temptations to Wickedneſs! to ſee the three Young Men in *Daniel* entring into Triumph,

Triumph, into the Flames, rather than to commit Idolatry? It is not ſo praiſe-worthy in the old to forſake their Sins, becauſe they can enjoy them but a little longer, but it will be ſo in you if you do it when you have the hopes of a long and eaſy Life. It was with a great Commendation that St. *John* writ to the Young Men, becauſe they had overcome the World, 1 *John* 2. 14. This early remembrance of God will make you Bleſſings to the Places where you live. Your blameleſs and holy Carriage will let others ſee that there is a great Beauty and Luſtre in Religion; and your practice will preſent it to their Obſervation as a very ſweet and amiable Thing. It will make thoſe that are your fellow-Apprentices, careful in what they ſay when they ſee in you the Fear of God, and that you dare not, for Advantage, Equivocate and Lie. It will make thoſe that are in the ſame Family inquiſitive about their State, when they ſee what Pains you take for your Salvation, when they conſider that they have Souls to ſave as well as you: Thus you will betimes come to Years of Diſcretion, and be old in Knowledg and Experience, though you are Young in Age; and God may bleſs the Houſes where you are, for your ſakes. And when it ſhall pleaſe him to call you to Houſes and Families of your own, you will perform all that concerns their Wellfare with a ſerious Application and Labour for the good of others. You will be perfectly inſtructed in every thing that is neceſſary for the due Government of all that are under your Authority; and as a little Leaven

ven communicates its Qualities into all the Parts; ſo will you cauſe your Graces to be diffuſed among all thoſe whom you are to Conduct and Govern: whereas when the Youth of a place are corrupt, 'tis an ill Omen to ſuch a People; 'tis a ſign that God is about to remove his Goſpel, when it is not ſucceſsful to the Converſion of many in their Early Age; ſo where-ever he intends to continue ſpiritual Mercies, and the Means of Grace, he prepares and reforms ſuch as may make a pious Poſterity, when others are paſt off the Stage. But what ſhall become of our Country, when thoſe Eyes are cloſed that uſed to look up to Heaven for a Bleſſing and to lament the publick Sins? When thoſe are in the Grave that uſed to ſtand in the Gap, and none riſe up in their ſteads, to keep off Wrath and Deſolation by their holy Prayers? Happy were it for *London*, happy for *England*, if there were a great Converſion of many in their Early Age to God: it were a ſign that there would be a long Succeſſion of Bleſſings to us and after-Ages. And if God ſets many new Plants in his Vineyard, it would be an hopeful Evidence of his continuing the Hedg about it. Whereas on the contrary nothing is a ſadder Preſage, than when the moſt young People in any place are corrupt, and Slaves to Luſt. One may, without pretending to be a Prophet, divine what God intends to do with a Nation hereafter, by the Temper and Diſpoſitions of the Young. When *Ely*'s Sons were wicked, a gloomy Seaſon obſcured the Light of *Iſrael*; the Ark was taken, and

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the Glory made to depart. It is a woful Proſpect to ſee, that inſtead of being better, the Young do encreaſe in Idleneſs, in Prophaneneſs, in Diſobedience, in Luxury, in Laſciviouſneſs, in Pride, and in all ſorts of Vanity. The Eyes of older Chriſtians are fix'd on you, and from your good or ill Carriage, they may ſee what is like to become of the next Generation. By quitting our early Luſts, we ſhall become faithful in our ſeveral Callings, and be duly Obedient and Loyal to our Superiors; for he cannot be a truſty or a loyal Subject to his Prince, that will betray his own Soul for a Luſt, and be an Enemy to his God. How can he be true to the Intereſts of another, that has no care of his own? What ſecurity is there in him that delivers up himſelf to every offering Temptation, and for a little pay, hires himſelf out to the Service of the Devil, forſaking his Allegiance to God, in a manner very baſe and ignominious.

Conſid. 9. *If it ſhould ſo happen that you ſhould die Young, you will have great peace in your Souls.* For though this Remembrance of God, and the quitting of your Luſts with Temperance, and Self-denial, and Obedience to Parents, tend very much to the Ends of Health, and the Prolongation of your Days; yet God oftentimes takes away thoſe that are very good, even in Youth, to puniſh the Wicked, by depriving them of ſuch uſeful Examples; or to take off the Hearts of their Parents from the World, who it may be valued them too much; or for many other Reaſons that are highly juſt, though un-

known to us. Yet however it will be no loss to you, when God calls you from serving him in the Country, and at a large distance, to serve him in the Court, and in his own Palace. The frequent Remembrance of your Creator, will take away from Death its frightful and gastly shape; nor will it seem a dismal thing for you to remove to him whom you have often thought upon; to die then, will be only as if you should cross the Narrow Seas with a fair Gale, and go and see a Friend with whom you have held good Correspondence, who hath sent you many rich Presents, and with whom you have long wish'd to be. While you are Young, please God by a constant opposing of your Sins, and then you will fight your last Battel with admirable skill, and be crowned with a sure Conquest; for this will be the Lot of all those who were ingaged betimes in this Holy War. It will be no loss, if you are called from the Pain and Labour of your present Duty, to be engaged in that which is both more easy, and more honourable; you will have no cause to repent, or be sorrowful, that you have not lived to see what it may be you most desire, the Prosperity of the Church on Earth, when you are entred into the Church in Heaven, no more than *Moses* was grieved that he did not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, when he was once possess'd of a Paradise above; it belongs to him, under whose Conduct we manage our present Warfare, to put, when he pleases, a Period to the War; we are sure that whenever it is, we

shall

ſhall not fail to receive our Pay. And though we loſe many of our Acquaintance that are Young, and in whom, becauſe of their Seriouſneſs, we took great delight, yet we ought not to envy them the peculiar Favour of God, that hath removed them betimes from an Evil World: Nor ought we to be vexed, that our Friends are ſafe, whilſt we are in Danger; or that they are in the Harbour, whilſt we are ſailing in the ſtormy Waves. It hath been obſerv'd, that Jeſus, when he knew that *Lazarus* was dead, was not much concern'd; but when he was to be rais'd, and to come into this miſerable World again, then he wept. And indeed, conſidering the Sorrows and Troubles, the Diſappointments and Vexations of this ſhort and uneaſy Life, how uncertain and how frail are all its Joys, and how ſure its Griefs: We may well think it was not without the higheſt Reaſon that the Wiſe Man ſaid, *Eccleſ.* 7. 1. *The Day of Death, is better than the Day of ones Birth.* To the Religious I am ſure it is greatly ſo; the one is as the entring into a noiſom Priſon, the other as the going out into a ſtately Palace and a clear Air; the one is the way to Labour, the other is the way to Reſt; the one a paſſage to a dark troubled Condition, the other to perpetual Calmneſs and Serenity: And if our holy Friends, that were better prepared to depart than we, have bid us Farewel, let us remember they are but gone, as our Saviour did (upon higher Accounts) to their Father and ours. And it is not a Farewel for

over, they are in the Houſe not made with Hands, and we are in this Tabernacle, yet we ſhall meet again, though not to eat and drink as we did here, yet to live as Angels do, upon the ſweet Emanations of the Deity, and the Joys that follow thereupon, which is a far more glorious and honourable Life. If many of our good Friends are in Heaven already, this World ſhould ſeem to us all a leſs deſirable Place. And we that are Young ſhould, upon this Conſideration, run with the greater haſte and chearfulneſs, and long to be there where none are complaining that they died too ſoon. Let us now be Religious, and then the time will come when you and I, and all the good People, both Young and Old, that we have known on Earth, ſhall meet together in the Preſence of our Lord, who, with the ſhouts of his attending Angels and Saints, will congratulate our Happineſs, and bid us welcome to the ſecure poſſeſſion of that glorious Crown for which we now ſtrive and pray. Then ſhall we diſcourſe of our Creator, and of all things that are great and comfortable, in a far better manner, and with much more pleaſure than we can below. It is our greateſt Concern to come well to the end of our Race; and if we do ſo, 'tis no matter though we are very ſoon there: If we have well improved our Day, 'tis no matter when the Shadows of the Evening are ſtretched out; we ſhall have a ſufficient Recompence for the want of further Time here, by an endleſs and a long Eternity.

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Let us *remember* our *Creator*, who if *we flouriſh in his Courts now*, will in due Seaſon tranſplant us into the Celeſtial Paradiſe, and when we hope to go thither, 'tis no matter how ſoon we die, it will be no real Evil, though it be in our youthful days. Can we too ſoon be with God, too ſoon at reſt from Labour, or ſhall we be wronged if *we ſleep in Jeſus*, while others are awake in this World, to ſee many ſad Objects that will pierce their Hearts, to ſee, it may be, many Judgments fall upon their Native Country? Shall we have any Reaſon to complain, when we are ſafe landed on the Coaſt of Heaven, that our Paſſage thither was too quick? or ſhall we murmur that we were too ſoon wafted over, while others were left in Storms and Darkneſs, and had a more tedious uncomfortable Voyage? No! we ſhall bleſs the Wiſdom of our Pilot that taught us how to ſteer ſo ſtreight, and ſo near a Courſe, and ever adore his Goodneſs when we look back and ſee what Dangers, how many Shelves and Sands and Rocks were in the way, and yet how ſafely we eſcaped all theſe on which ſo many ſplit and were loſt for ever. If we now *Remember our Creator*, when we leave this vexatious uncertain World, we ſhall go to the Boſom of our Lord, and to all thoſe bleſſed Young Men whom he gathered into his Garner betimes, as knowing they were fully ripe for Glory. With theſe, and with the Glorious Angels, and with all Saints, ſhall we joyn our Anthems, and together make

up

up a Melodious Consort to *sing the Songs of Sion.* The God that gave us our Life, knows best when 'tis the most proper and fit Time for us to die: And if he calls us away soon, it may be to take us from the Evil to come, and to secure us from a Storm. And if he chuse others to be Instruments of his Glory here on Earth, we who desired to serve him longer here in Hardships and Difficulties, shall have a plentiful Reward for our sincere Inclinations; and when our Blessed Lord comes again, we shall have a Crown of Glory, and rejoice with all those Holy Persons that have slept in Jesus; nor will it then signify much, who went sooner or later into the Bed of Death.

FINIS.

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